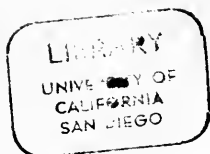


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T H E L I F E

OF

JOHN DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND OF
THE WAR OF THE SUCCESSION.

BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF EUROPE."

SECOND EDITION, GREATLY ENLARGED.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

It is a common and very just observation, that biography relates to persons, and history to events ; and therefore that the principles of composition in the two must be different. Yet this remark has its limits, for the rise and fall of nations often depend so much on individual agency that the record of their growth and decline runs into the lives of particular men ; and the transactions of nations give such prominence to leading characters that general history insensibly turns into biography. He who undertakes to write the history of the French Revolution will soon find his narrative turn into the biographies of Napoleon and Wellington ; and he who sets about the life of Marlborough will ere long discover that he has insensibly become engaged in a general history of the War of the Succession.

Consummate, however, as were the abilities, unbroken the success, immense the services, of the Duke of Marlborough, the details of his campaigns can scarcely be said to be known to the vast majority of his countrymen. They have heard the distant echo of his fame, as they have that of the exploits of Timour, of Bajazet, and of Genghis Khan ; the names of Blenheim and Ramilies, of Oudenarde and Malplaquet,

awaken a transient feeling of exultation in their bosoms ; but as to the particulars of these events, the difficulties with which their general had to struggle, the objects for which he contended, even the places where they occurred—they are, for the most part, as ignorant as they are of similar details in the campaigns of Baber or Aurengzebe. What they do know is derived chiefly, if not entirely, from the histories of their enemies. Malice and party spirit have done much to dim the reputation of the illustrious General in his own country, but these disturbing passions have not been felt in other states ; and, strange to say, no adequate opinion of his merits can be formed by his countrymen, but by viewing the impression he has made on her enemies, or studying the history of his victories by them.

Marlbrough's exploits made a prodigious impression on the Continent. The French, who felt the edge of his flaming sword, and saw the glories of the *Grand Monarque* torn from the long triumphant brow of Louis XIV. ; the Dutch, who found in his conquering arm the stay of their sinking republic, and their salvation from slavery and persecution ; the Germans, who beheld the flames of the Palatinate avenged by his resistless power, and the ravages of war rolled back from the Rhine into the territory of the state which had provoked them ; the Lutherans, who regarded him as the appointed instrument of Divine vengeance, to punish the infamous perfidy and cruelty of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—have concurred in celebrating his exploits. The French nurses frightened their children with stories of “Marlbrook,” as the Orientals, when their horses start, say they see the shadow of Richard Cœur-de-Lion crossing their path. Napoleon hummed the well-known air,

“Marlbrook s'en va-t en guerre,” when he crossed the Niemen to commence the Moscow campaign.

The fortunate accident is generally known by which the great collection of papers lately published in London has been brought to light. That this collection should at length have become known is less surprising than that it should so long have remained forgotten, and have eluded the researches of so many persons interested in the subject. It embraces, as Sir George Murray's lucid preface explains, a complete series of the correspondence of the great Duke from 1702 to 1712, the ten years of his most important public services. In addition to the Despatches of the Duke himself, the letters, in some places very numerous, of his private secretary, Mr Cardonnell, and a journal written by his Grace's chaplain, Dr Hare, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, are contained in the eighteen manuscript volumes which were discovered in the record-room of Hensington, near Woodstock, in October 1842, and which have now been given to the public. They are of essential service, especially in rendering intelligible the details of the correspondence, otherwise in great part uninteresting, and scarcely intelligible, at least by the ordinary reader. Some of the most valuable parts of the work, particularly a full detail of the battle of Blenheim, have been drawn from Dr Hare's journal. In addition to this, the bulletins of some of the events, issued by Government at the time, are to be found in notes at the proper places; and in the text are occasionally contained short, but correct and luminous notices, of the preceding or contemporaneous political and military events which are alluded to, but not described, in the Despatches, and which are necessary for the proper understanding of many of their particulars. Nothing,

in a word, has been omitted by the accomplished editor which could illustrate or render intelligible the valuable collection of materials placed at his disposal. Yet, with all his pains and ability, it is often very difficult to follow the detail of events, or understand the matters alluded to in the Despatches: so great is the lack of information regarding the eventful War of the Succession, from the want of a popular historian to record it, even among well-informed persons in this country.

To the historian who is to go minutely into the details of Marlborough's campaigns and negotiations, and to whom accurate and authentic information is of inestimable importance, it need hardly be said that these papers are of the utmost value. But, to the general reader, all such voluminous publications and despatches must, as a matter of necessity, be comparatively uninteresting. They always contain a great deal of repetition, in consequence of the necessity under which the commander lay of communicating the same event to those with whom he was in correspondence in many different quarters. Great part of them relate to details of discipline, furnishing supplies, getting up stores, and other necessary matters, of little value even to the historian, except in so far as they illustrate the industry, energy, and difficulties of the commander. The general reader, who plunges into the midst of the Marlborough Despatches in this age, or into those of Wellington in the next, when contemporary recollection has failed, will find it impossible to understand the greater part of the matters referred to, and will soon lay aside the volumes in despair. Such works are highly valuable, but they are so to the annalist or historian rather than to the ordinary reader. They are the

materials of history, not history itself. They bear the same relation to the works of Livy or Gibbon which the rude blocks in the quarry do to the temples of St Peter's or the Parthenon.

The accurate, comprehensive, and admirable life of Marlborough, by Archdeacon Coxe, must always maintain its place as the most authentic and valuable life of him which exists. Founded on a close examination of the correspondence preserved at Blenheim, and embracing all its most valuable parts, it presents the hero painted by the most valuable of all painters, his own contemporaries or himself, in their private and confidential correspondence. Nothing can exceed the diligence, zeal, and energy with which the Archdeacon has discharged this important task. But his work, invaluable as one of reference, is not calculated to interest the general reader. It is too long and expensive for such an object, and too full of long documents and letters *in the text*—a fault which has proved fatal, as popular works, to many other biographies besides those of that respectable writer. The earlier lives of Marlborough, particularly the able but somewhat partial one by Ledyard, are still of value, and are frequently referred to; but they were written too near the time to be impartial, and the documents had not then been published which could render them authentic. Mr Gleig's life, in his *Military Commanders*, is written with his usual fire and genius; but it is too brief, and contains too little reference to authority, to permit of its being frequently referred to.

France has produced several admirable works to illustrate Marlborough's campaigns. Napoleon was so strongly impressed with their value that he caused a life of the English

hero to be written in 1807, which contains, in three volumes, the best military narrative which has yet appeared of his exploits. The great collection of original letters and despatches contained in the *Mémoires Militaire relatifs à la Succession d'Espagne*, edited by General Pelot, in nine quarto volumes, contains all the principal despatches on the subject, and may well be put beside Coxe and the Marlborough Despatches for the Continental side of the contest. Rousset's magnificent work, published at the Hague in 1720, in three volumes folio, is chiefly valuable as containing the Dutch account of the memorable war of the Succession ; and Kausler, in the admirable summary of great battles annexed to his splendid military atlas, has diligently collected and formed a *resumé* from the best authorities on the subject. To these foreign works the volumes now submitted to the public have been largely indebted, and they will be found referred to in every page.

The first edition of this work, in one volume, was intended as a mere sketch, chiefly for military readers, and was suggested by the perusal of the Marlborough Despatches on their first appearance. The favourable reception which the work received from the public, and the increasing interest in the subject, has induced the author in this edition to extend his original design, so as not only to embrace the political life of Marlborough, as well as the military, but to state at the end of every paragraph, as in his *History of Europe*, the authorities on which it was founded. In this way it has insensibly turned into a history of the War of the Succession, at least in those portions of it with which Great Britain is immediately concerned.

The Map illustrative of the Campaigns of Marlborough is

constructed with the greatest care, and is so arranged as to show the positions of every place in strict accordance with the text ; while the Plans of Battles, so essential to the elucidation of military history, have been accurately reduced, and improved by the addition of the names of Commanders, &c., from the great German work of Kausler, so well known from the splendour of its finishing and the accuracy of its details.

A. ALISON.

POSSIL HOUSE,
December 1, 1851.

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L I F E

OF

M A R L B O R O U G H

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH, AND EARLY HISTORY OF MARLBOROUGH—HIS SHARE IN THE
REVOLUTION OF 1688 — CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE WAR OF THE
SUCCESSION.

JOHN CHURCHILL, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, was born on the 5th July 1650, (new style,) at Ash, in the county of Devon. His father was Sir Winston Churchill, a gallant cavalier who had drawn his sword in behalf of Charles I., and had in consequence been deprived of his fortune and driven into exile by Cromwell. His paternal family was very ancient, and boasted its descent from the *Coureils* de Poitou, who came into England with the Conqueror. His mother was Elizabeth Drake, who claimed a collateral connection with the descendants of the illustrious Sir Francis Drake, the great navigator. The eldest son Winston died in infancy ; so that John, who was the second, became heir to the honours, and all but ruined fortunes of the family. Arabella the eldest, and the only daughter, was born at

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I.

1.
Birth, and
family of
Marlbo-
rough.

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Ash, in February 1648 ; and, from the interest which the loyalty of the family had excited, was appointed maid of honour to the Duchess of York, in which situation she captivated the Duke of York, brother of the reigning monarch, and became his mistress. This circumstance was not without its influence on the future fate of her brother ; and, what is very remarkable, it gave rise to the birth of a hero who almost singly supported the tottering throne of Louis XIV. against the conquering sword of her redoubtable brother. From this illicit connection sprang James Fitzjames, afterwards Duke of Berwick, who commanded the armies of France and Spain during the War of the Succession, gained the decisive victory of Almanza, and almost counterbalanced by his military genius the victories of his uncle in Germany and Flanders. This circumstance is well worthy of attention, both as demonstrating—what so many other biographies do—the descent of *intellectual* powers by the mother's side, and as showing that the military bent forms no exception to the general rule ; for both Marlborough and Berwick inherited their warlike talents, through the female line, from Sir Francis Drake ; and most certainly the former derived none of it from the brave and unfortunate race of the Stuarts.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
1-49, Intro-
duction.

2.

His early
life and
education.

Young Churchill received the rudiments of his education from the parish clergyman in Devonshire, from whom he imbibed that firm attachment to the Protestant faith by which he was ever afterwards distinguished, and which determined his conduct in the most important crisis of his life. He was afterwards placed at the school of St Paul's ; and it was there that he first discovered, on reading Vegetius, that his bent of mind was decidedly

for the military life.* “What is usually called genius,” says Johnson, “is nothing but strong natural parts accidentally turned in one direction.” But this instance, like many others, would seem to show that there is a natural bent in some minds to particular pursuits, which, as well as general talent, leads to future greatness. Like many other men destined to future distinction, he made no great figure as a scholar; a circumstance easily explained, if we recollect that it is on the knowledge of words that the reputation of a schoolboy is founded—of a man on that of things. But the Despatches now published demonstrate that, before he attained middle life, he was a proficient in at least Latin, French, and English composition; for letters in each language are to be found in all parts of his correspondence.¹

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¹ Coxe, i.
2, 3.

From his first youth young Churchill was distinguished by the elegance of his manners and the beauty of his countenance and figure—advantages which, coupled with the known loyal principles and the sufferings of his father in the royal cause, procured for him, at the early age of fifteen, the situation of page in the household of the Duke of York, afterwards James II. His inclination for arms was then so decided that he was rarely absent at the reviews of the Guards; and on occasion of one of them, being asked by his royal patron in what manner he should provide for him, he threw himself on his knees, and begged he might get a pair of colours in

3.

His first
appearance
and early
promotion
at court.

* This curious fact is thus attested in a copy of Vegetius, by the Rev. G. North: “From this very book John Churchill, scholar of this school, afterwards the celebrated Duke of Marlborough, first learnt the elements of the art of war, as was told to me, George North, on St Paul’s Day, 1724–5, by an old clergyman who said he was a contemporary scholar, was then well acquainted with him, and frequently saw him read it. This I testify to be true.”—G. NORTH.

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I.

one of those splendid regiments. Accordingly that prince procured for him a commission in one of the regiments of Guards, when he was only sixteen years old. His uncommonly handsome figure then attracted no small share of notice from the beauties of the court of Charles II., and even awakened a passion in one of the royal mistresses herself. But, impatient to signalise himself, he left their seductions, and embarked as a volunteer in the expedition to Tangiers in 1666, but was soon recalled by the Duke of York to London. During his brief absence, however, he eagerly engaged in the various sallies and skirmishes made from that town, then a dependency of the British crown, and besieged by the Moors. Thus his first essay in arms was made in actions against those undisciplined but formidable barbarians, who, from the days of Jugurtha to our times, have proved so difficult of subjugation by European discipline.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
4-6. Hist.
de Marl. i.
3-4.

4.
His intrigue
with the
Countess of
Castlemaine.

Having returned to Great Britain, he attracted the notice of the Countess of Castlemaine, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, then the favourite mistress of Charles II., who had distinguished him by her regard before he embarked for Africa, and who some years after made him a present of £5000, with which the young soldier bought an annuity of £500, which laid the foundation, says Chesterfield, of all his subsequent fortunes. Marlborough is the first hero recorded in history whose career was commenced by the to him *profitable* results of an intrigue with women—the well-known rock on which the fortunes of so many of his predecessors in the race of glory had been shipwrecked.* Charles, to

* Among the Blenheim Papers is the original agreement, dated in 1674, stating that Colonel Churchill had purchased from Lord Halifax an annuity

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remove a dangerous rival in her unsteady affections, gave him a company in the Guards, and sent him to the Continent with the auxiliary force which, in those days of English humiliation, the cabinet of St James's furnished to Louis XIV., to aid him in subduing the United Provinces. Thus, by a singular coincidence, it was under Turenne, Condé, and Vauban that the future conqueror of the Bourbons first learned the art of scientific warfare. Wellington went through the same practical course of study, but in the inverse order—his first campaigns were made against the French in Flanders, his next against the bastions of Tippoo and the Mahratta horse in Hindostan.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
4-6. Hist.
de Marlbo-
rough, i. 3, 4.

Churchill had not been long in Flanders before his talents and gallantry won for him deserved distinction. The campaign of 1672, which brought the French armies to the gates of Amsterdam, and placed the United Provinces within a hair's-breadth of destruction, was to him fruitful in valuable lessons. The army of Louis XIV., though nominally commanded by that monarch, was really under the direction of Turenne and the Prince of Condé, the two greatest generals of the age. Churchill distinguished himself in many of their operations, and volunteered on every service of difficulty or danger. He gained so much honour at the siege of Nimeguen that Turenne, who constantly called him by the *soubriquet* of "the handsome Englishman," predicted that he would one day be a great man. On

5.
His services
under Louis
XIV. and
Turenne in
Flanders.

of £500 per annum, for the sum of £4500.—COXE, i. 13; CHESTERFIELD, ii. 297. Coxe, who, however able and meritorious, is often too partial a biographer, endeavours to insinuate that he owed this liberality on the part of the Countess of Castlemaine, afterwards created Duchess of Cleveland by Charles II., to a distant relationship by affinity to that lady. But if the reverend archdeacon had been as well acquainted with women as he was with his books, he would have known that beautiful ladies do not in general bestow £5000 on distant cousins, whatever they may do on favoured lovers.

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one occasion a French colonel, M. Rousset, was forced to abandon a post. Turenne, who witnessed the retreat, betted that Churchill, with half the force, would regain it. He gave him the command, and Churchill, in presence of the whole army, recovered the post after a desperate struggle. In the following year he was engaged in the siege of Maestricht; and there he saved the life of the Duke of Monmouth. The Duke had received orders to attack the counterscarp, which he did with success under the eyes of Louis XIV.; but the detachment of French guards who carried it were immediately after expelled by the besieged. Monmouth upon this put himself at the head of a small body of twelve English volunteers, among whom was Churchill, who regained the work after a desperate struggle, and planted with his own hand the French standard on the breach. In this struggle he was slightly wounded; but he had the good fortune to save the life of his colonel, the Duke of Monmouth, who, on presenting him to Charles II., said, "To the bravery of this gallant officer I owe my life." He acquired so much renown at the siege of Maestricht that Louis XIV. publicly thanked him at the head of his army, and promised him his powerful influence with Charles II. for future promotion. He little thought what a formidable enemy he was then fostering at the court of his obsequious brother sovereign. The result of Louis XIV.'s intercession, and of the high character which Churchill had already acquired, was, that he was made lieutenant-colonel; and he continued to serve with the English auxiliary force in Flanders, under the French generals, till 1677, when he returned with his regiment to London.¹

¹ COXE, i.
6, 7. Hist.
de Marlborough, i. 69.

Beyond all doubt it was these five years' service

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6.
Manner in
which Pro-
vidence
moulds the
character of
a great man.

under the great masters of the military art, who then sustained the power and cast a halo round the crown of Louis XIV., which rendered Marlborough the consummate commander that he showed himself to have become, from the moment he was placed at the head of the allied armies. One of the most interesting and instructive lessons to be learned from biography is derived from observing the long steps, the vast amount of previous preparation, the numerous changes—some prosperous, others adverse—by which the powers of a great man are formed, and he is prepared for playing the important part which it is intended he should perform on the theatre of the world. Providence does nothing in vain ; and when it has selected a particular mind for a great achievement, the events which happen to it all seem to conspire in a mysterious way for its development. Were any one omitted, some essential quality in the character of the future hero, statesman, or philosopher, would be found to be wanting.

Here also, as in every other period of history, we may see how unprincipled ambition overvaults itself ; and the measures which seem, at first sight, most securely to establish its oppressive reign, are the as yet unperceived means by which an overruling Power works out its destruction. Doubtless the able ministers of Louis XIV. deemed their master's power secure when this long-desired but scarce hoped-for alliance was concluded ; when the English monarch had become a state-pensioner of the court of Versailles ; when a secret treaty had united them by apparently indissoluble bonds ; when the ministers alike with the patriots of England were corrupted by his bribes ; when the dreaded fleets of Britain were to be seen in union

7.
Manner in
which the
ambition of
Louis XIV.
worked out
its own ruin.

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I.

with those of France, leagued to overpower the squadrons of an inconsiderable republic ; when the descendants of the conquerors at Cressy, Poitiers, and Azincour stood side by side with the successors of the vanquished in those disastrous fields, ready to achieve the conquest of Flanders and Holland. Without doubt, so far as human foresight could go, Louvois and Colbert were right. Nothing could appear so decidedly calculated to fix the power of Louis XIV. on an immovable foundation. But how vain are the calculations of the great human intellects, when put in opposition to the overruling will of Omnipotence ! and how often are the very measures by which success seems best secured to the vision of earthly wisdom, afterwards found to have been the means by which its designs were defeated by the far-seeing eye of the Almighty ! It was that very English alliance which ruined Louis XIV., as the Austrian alliance and marriage, which seemed to put the keystone in the arch of his greatness, afterwards ruined Napoleon. As a result, and one of the most desired results, of the English alliance, a strong body of British auxiliaries were sent to Flanders ; the English officers learned the theory and practice of war in the best of all schools, and under the best of all teachers ; that ignorance of the military art, (the result, in every age, of our insular situation, and which generally causes the first four or five years of every war to terminate in disaster,) was for the time removed ; and that mighty genius was developed under the eye of Louis XIV., and by the example of Turenne, which was destined to hurl back to its own frontiers the tide of Gallic invasion, and close in mourning the reign of the *Grand Monarque*. “Les hommes agissent,” says Bossuet, “mais Dieu les mène.”

Upon Churchill's return to London, the brilliant reputation which had preceded, and the even augmented personal advantages which accompanied him, immediately rendered him the idol of beauty and fashion. The sovereign distinguished him by his regard, ladies of the palace vied for his homage, the nobles of the land hastened to cultivate his society. Like Julius Cæsar, he was carried away by the stream, and plunged into the vortex of courtly dissipation with the ardour which marks an energetic character in the pursuit either of good or evil. The elegance of his person and manners, and the charms of his conversation, prevailed so far with Charles II. and the Duke of York that events soon succeeded which made his fortune. In 1678 he married the celebrated Sarah Jennings, the favourite lady in attendance on the Princess Anne, second daughter of the Duke of York, one of the most admired beauties of the court, and shortly after obtained a regiment.¹

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8.
Churchill's
marriage.¹ Coxe, i.
14-16.

This lady, who afterwards, as Duchess of Marlborough, became celebrated, was possessed of great personal charms, and more than ordinary talent, and, what was still more remarkable, she had preserved her reputation unspotted amidst the seductions of a corrupted court. She was descended of an ancient Royalist family, which, like that of Churchill, had suffered for its fidelity during the civil wars. But these brilliant qualities were counterbalanced by others of an opposite description, which came, in the end, to exercise a most pernicious influence on her husband's fortunes. She was proud, ambitious, and overbearing, selfishly set on aggrandisement, and haughty and imperious in her temper. So great, however, were her abilities, that she preserved her influence

9.
Her character.

CHAP. over her husband undiminished during his whole life ;
 I. and his letters to her, not only during his courtship,
 but through the whole of life, breathe a spirit of
 ardent and chivalrous devotion which, at first sight,
 appears to contrast strangely with the general sedate-
 ness of his character. Their marriage—long delayed
 by want of adequate fortune on both sides—was at
 length brought about by a moving appeal on his part,
 occasioned by a generous declaration on hers, that she
 would accompany her sister, the Countess of Hamilton,
 to Paris, to wean her lover from an attachment which
 could not but prove prejudicial to his fortunes. This
 combination of tender and romantic feeling, with great
 steadiness and consequent success in life, though not usual,
 is far from being unnatural or unknown. It arises from
 the imaginative and intellectual faculties being developed
 in *equal* proportions—a combination which prevents either
 from attracting general attention, and is so rare in real
 life that, when presented in fiction, it passes for unna-
 tural, but which, when it does exist, seldom fails to lead
 to the greatest civil or military distinction.¹

¹ Coxe,
 i. 14-16.
 Life of Du-
 chess of
 Marlboro-
 ough, i.
 22-34.

10.
 His journey
 to Scotland,
 and rapid
 rise at
 court.

This alliance increased his influence, already great,
 with the Duke of York, and laid the foundation of the
 future grandeur of his fortunes. Shortly after his mar-
 riage he was sent on a mission of peculiar delicacy to
 William, Stadtholder of Holland, who had recently before
 married Mary, daughter of that prince. He was after-
 wards employed on various diplomatic missions, for which
 his elegant manners and great address peculiarly quali-
 fied him. Some years after, he accompanied the Duke of
 York to Scotland, where he remained for some time ; in
 the course of one of their voyages to which country they
 were both nearly shipwrecked on the coast of Essex, off

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Yarmouth. On this occasion the Duke made the greatest efforts to preserve his favourite's life, and succeeded in doing so, although the danger was such that many of the Scottish nobles perished under his eye. On their return to London in 1682, Churchill was presented by his patron to the King, who made him colonel of the third regiment of Guards. When the Duke of York ascended the throne in 1685, on the demise of his brother, Churchill kept his place as one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and was raised to the rank of brigadier-general. He was sent to Paris, to notify his sovereign's accession to Louis XIV.; and on his return he was created a peer, by the title of Baron Churchill of Sandbridge, in the county of Hertford—a title which he took from an estate there which he had acquired in right of his wife.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
19, 28, 31.

On the revolt of the Duke of Monmouth, he had an opportunity of showing at once his military ability, and, by a signal service, his gratitude to his benefactor. Lord Feversham had the command of the royal forces, and Churchill was brigadier under him. When the Duke first landed he performed very important duties, with a small force, consisting of nine companies of foot and six troops of horse, which he assembled at Salisbury. By his indefatigable activity at the head of this little band he powerfully contributed to arrest the progress of the insurrection, which was at first very formidable. So valuable did his direction prove that on July 1, 1685, he was appointed major-general of the army; and he soon had an opportunity of showing how well qualified he was for the situation. The general-in-chief kept so bad a look-out that he was on the point of being surprised and cut to pieces by the rebel forces, who, on this occasion

11.
His important services on Monmouth's rebellion.

CHAP.

I.

at least, were conducted with ability. Feversham, and almost all his officers were in their beds, and sound asleep, when Monmouth, at the head of all his forces, silently issued from his camp, and suddenly fell on the royal army. But for the vigilance of Churchill, who had his little corps in perfect readiness, the surprise would have been complete, and the royal army cut in pieces. With this small but determined band, however, he made so vigorous a resistance as gave time for the remainder of the army to get into order and sustain the attack. Monmouth's foot advanced in perfect silence, shrouded in darkness, to the edge of the stream called the Bresser Rhine, on the other side of which Churchill's men were drawn up in perfect array. "For whom are you?" called an officer of the royal army. "For the king!" replied a voice from the rebel ranks. "For which king?" rejoined the royalist. "King Monmouth," was the reply; which was immediately followed by a volley so close and well directed as sent the rebel horse right about, scattered in all directions. The alarm now became general: the foot-soldiers issued from their tents—the horsemen, many of them half-drunk, from their stables; the ranks were hastily formed; and this well-conceived nocturnal attack, which had so nearly proved successful against the royalists, terminated in the victory of Sedgemoor, which determined the fate of Monmouth, and for a brief season fixed James on the throne.¹

¹ Macaulay, i. 608, 609.
Coxe, i. 31, 32. Hist. de Marlborough, i. 31-33.

12.
His endeavours to arrest the headlong course of James.

Churchill's mind was too sagacious, and his knowledge of the feelings of the nation too extensive, not to be aware of the perilous nature of the course upon which James soon after adventured, in endeavouring to bring about, if not the absolute re-establishment of the Catholic religion, at least such a quasi-establishment of it as the

people deemed, and probably with reason, was, with so aspiring a body of ecclesiastics, in effect the same thing. When he saw the headstrong monarch break through all bonds, and openly trample on the liberties, while he shocked the religious feelings of his people, he wrote to him to point out, in firm but respectful terms, the danger of his conduct. He declared to Lord Galway, when James's innovations began, that, if he persisted in his design of overturning the constitution and religion of his country, he would leave his service; and he was one of the first who, finding all his efforts ineffectual, made secret overtures to the Prince of Orange, through Mr Dykvelt, the agent of the Prince, and Russell and Sidney, the great movers of the Revolution which followed. At the same time he announced to William the resolution of the Princess Anne, rather to abandon her infatuated father than sacrifice her religion.* So far his conduct

* "The Princess of Denmark having ordered me to discourse with Monsieur Dykvelt, and to let him know her resolution, so that he might let your Highness, and the Princess her sister, know that she was resolved, by the assistance of God, to suffer all extremities, even to death itself, rather than be brought to change her religion—I thought it my duty to your Highness and the Princess Royal, by this opportunity of Monsieur Dykvelt, to give you assurances under my own hand, that my places and the King's favour I set at nought, in comparison of being true to my religion. In all things but this the King may command me; and I call God to witness, that even with joy I should expose my life in his service, so sensible am I of his favours. I know the troubling you, sir, with thus much concerning myself, I being of so little use to your Highness, is very impertinent; but I think it may be a great ease to your Highness and the Princess to be satisfied that the Princess of Denmark is safe in the trusting of me—I being resolved, though I cannot live the life of a saint, if there be occasion for it, to show the resolution of a martyr."—*Lord Churchill to William of Orange*, May 17, 1687. COXE, i. 34. This is the first authentic indication of Marlborough's intended defection, and the best vindication of it that has ever since been offered.

While thus corresponding with William of Orange, however, he was not less assiduous in his endeavours to divert James from the headlong course which appeared so likely to render that defection necessary. During the

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I.

was perfectly unexceptionable. Our first duty is to our country, our second only to our benefactor. If they are brought into collision, as they often are during the melancholy vicissitudes of a civil war, an honourable man, whatever it may cost him, has but one part to take. He must not abandon his public duty for his private feelings, but he must never betray official duty. If Churchill, perceiving the frantic course of his master, had withdrawn from his service, and then either taken no part in the Revolution which followed, or even appeared in arms against him, the most scrupulous moralist could have discovered nothing reprehensible in his conduct.¹ History has in every age applauded the virtue, while it has commiserated the anguish, of the elder Brutus, who

¹ Coxe, i.
34-37.
Hist. de
Marlbo-
rough, i.
27-39.

summer of 1687, when James was making a progress through the southern counties, with a view to reconcile his subjects to the innovations which were in progress, Churchill waited on him at Winchester. "Well, Churchill," said the King, "what do my subjects say to this ceremony of touching in the church," (for the king's evil.) "Truly," replied Churchill, "they do not approve it; and it is the general opinion that your Majesty is paving the way for the introduction of Popery." "How!" exclaimed the King; "have I not given my royal word, and will they not believe their King? I have always given liberty of conscience to others; I was always of opinion that toleration was necessary for all Christian people; and most certainly I will not be abridged of that liberty myself, nor suffer those of my religion to be prevented from paying their devotions to God in their own way." These words were uttered with great warmth; but Churchill had courage to reply—"What I spoke, sir, proceeded from my zeal for your Majesty's service, which I prefer above all things next to that of God; and I humbly beseech your Majesty to believe, that no subject in the three kingdoms will venture further than I will to purchase your favour and good liking. But as I have been bred a Protestant, and intend to live and die in that communion, and as above nine out of ten in England are of that persuasion, I fear from the genius of the people, and their natural aversion to the Roman Catholic worship, some consequences which I dare not so much as name, and which I cannot contemplate without horror." "I tell you, Churchill," said the King, interrupting him, "I will exercise my own religion as I think fit; I will be a common father to all my Protestants, of what religion soever: but I am a King, and am to be obeyed by them. The consequences I leave to Providence."—COXE, i. 36, 37.

sacrificed his sons to the perhaps too rigorous laws of his country.

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But Churchill did not do this, and thence has arisen an ineffaceable blot on his memory. He did not relinquish the service of the infatuated monarch; he retained his office and commands; but he employed the influence and authority thence derived to ruin his benefactor. Information was sent to James that he was not to be trusted; but, so far were those representations from having inspired any doubts of his fidelity, that that deluded monarch, when the Prince of Orange landed, confided to him the command of a corps of five thousand men destined to oppose his progress, and raised him to the rank of lieutenant-general. He led this force in person as far as Salisbury, to meet William, who was advancing through Devonshire. And yet he had before that written to William a letter, still extant, in which he expressed entire devotion to his cause.* Nay, he at this time, if we may believe his panegyrist Ledyard, signed a letter, along with several other peers, addressed to the Prince of Orange, inviting him to come over, and had actually concluded with Major-general Kirk, who commanded at Axminster, a convention, for the seizure of the King, and giving him up to his hostile son-in-law. James was secretly warned that Churchill was about to betray him;

12.
He deserts
James II.
on the inva-
sion of the
Prince of
Orange.

* "SIR,—Mr Sidney will let you know how I intend to behave myself. I think it is what I owe to God and my country. My honour I take leave to put into your Highness's hands, where I think it is safe. If you think there is anything which I ought to do, you have but to command me. I shall pay *an entire obedience to it*, being resolved to die in that religion that it hath pleased God to give you both the will and the power to protect."—*Lord Churchill to the Prince of Orange*, Aug. 4, 1688. William landed at Torbay on Nov. 5, 1688; so that three months before Marlborough accepted the command of the forces destined to oppose, he had secretly agreed to join him.—COXE, i. 37; DALRYMPLE'S *Mem.* ii. 121, Appendix to Book v.

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but he refused to believe it of one from whom he had hitherto experienced such devotion, and was only wakened from his dream of security by learning that his favourite had gone over, with the Duke of Grafton, and the principal officers of his regiment, to the Prince of Orange.* Not content with this, he shortly after employed his influence with his own regiment, and others stationed near London, to induce them to desert James and join the invading candidate for the throne. His departure was the signal for a general defection, which included the nearest relations of the falling monarch. Prince George of Denmark left him at Andover, and joined the Prince

* Marlborough, on leaving the King, sent the following letter to him:—
“SIR,—Since men are seldom suspected of sincerity when they act contrary to their interests, and though my dutiful behaviour to your Majesty in the worst of times (for which I acknowledge my poor services much overpaid) may not be sufficient to incline you to a charitable interpretation of my actions, yet I hope the great advantage I enjoy under your Majesty, which I cannot expect to enjoy under any other Government, may reasonably convince your Majesty and the world that I am actuated by a higher principle, when I offer that violence to my inclination and interest as to desert your Majesty at a time when your affairs seem to challenge the strictest obedience from all your subjects, much more from one who lies under such obligations to your Majesty. This, Sir, could proceed from nothing but the inviolable dictates of my conscience, and a necessary concern for my religion (which no good man can oppose,) and with which, I am instructed, nothing can come in competition. Heaven knows with what partiality my dutiful regard for your Majesty has hitherto represented those unhappy dangers which inconsiderate and self-interested men have framed against your Majesty’s true interest and the Protestant Religion; but as I can no longer join with such to give a pretence by conduct to bring them to effect, so I will always, with the hazard of my life and fortune (so much your Majesty’s due,) endeavour to preserve your royal person and lawful rights, with all the tender concern and dutiful respect that becomes me.”—*Lord Churchill to James II.*, Nov. 12, 1688. LEDYARD, i. 75, and COXE, i. 39. On reading this letter, James said to Lord Feversham, much agitated—“You knew him better than me, my Lord, when you proposed to me to arrest him, and those who have accompanied him in his flight; but I did not expect so terrible a blow. I have now no other resource but to throw myself into the arms of Providence. I can no longer reckon on my troops, who are without doubt corrupted by their officers.”—*Hist. de Marlborough*, 39, 40.

of Orange at Sherborne, while the Princess Anne secretly withdrew from the palace at midnight, and repaired to Northampton, from whence she was escorted by a party of horse to Oxford, where she joined the Prince her husband. This was a stunning blow to the unhappy James, and drew from him the mournful exclamation, "My God! my very children have forsaken me."¹

In what does this conduct differ from that of Labedoyère, who, at the head of the garrison of Grenoble, deserted to Napoleon when sent out to oppose him?—or Lavalette, who employed his influence, as postmaster under Louis XVIII., to forward the Imperial conspiracy?—or Marshal Ney, who, after promising at the Tuileries to bring the ex-Emperor back in an iron cage, no sooner reached the royal camp at Melun than he issued a proclamation calling on the troops to desert the Bourbons, and mount the tricolor cockade? Nay, is not Churchill's conduct, in a moral point of view, worse than that of Ney? for the latter abandoned the trust reposed in him by a new master, forced upon an unwilling nation, to rejoin his old benefactor and companion in arms; but the former betrayed the trust reposed in him by his old master and tried benefactor, to range himself under the banner of a competitor for the throne, to whom he was bound neither by duty nor obligation. And yet, such is often the inequality of crimes and punishments in this world, that Churchill was raised to the pinnacle of greatness by the very treachery which consigned Ney, with justice, so far as his conduct is concerned, to an ignominious death.

"Treason ne'er prospers; for when it does,
None dare call it treason."

History forgets its first and noblest duty when it

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I.

¹ Coxe, i.
37, 38, 41.
Hist. de
Marlb., i.
39-44.
Ledyard,
i. 75.

14.
Parallel be-
tween his
treachery
and that
of Ney.

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fails, by its distribution of praise and blame, to counter-balance, so far as its verdict can, this inequality, which, for inscrutable but doubtless wise purposes, Providence has permitted in this transient scene. Charity forbids us to scrutinise such conduct too severely. It is the deplorable consequence of a successful revolution, even when commenced for the most necessary purposes, to obliterate the ideas of man on right and wrong, and to leave no other test in the general case for public conduct but success: its first effect, to place men in such trying circumstances that nothing but the most confirmed and resolute virtue can pass unscathed through the ordeal. He knew the human heart well who commanded us in our daily prayers to supplicate not to be led into temptation, even before asking for deliverance from evil. Let no man be sure, however much, on a calm survey, he may condemn the conduct of Marlborough and Ney, that in similar circumstances he would not have done the same.

15.
Honours
and com-
mands be-
stowed on
Churchill.
He signs
the Act of
Association
in favour of
William.

On the approach of William towards the capital, and the flight of James to Feversham, Churchill was sent forward to reassemble his own squadron of Guards, and procure the adhesion of the other troops in and round the metropolis—a service which he rendered with equal prudence and ability. The report he brought back of the disposition of the troops there was so favourable as induced William, accompanied by Churchill, to hasten on to London. When there, he signed, on the 20th December 1688, the famous Act of Association in favour of the Prince of Orange. Shortly after, he was named lieutenant-general of the armies of William, and immediately made a new organisation of the troops, under officers whom he could trust, which proved of the utmost service to William, on the unstable throne on

which he was soon after seated. He was present at most of the long and momentous debates which took place in the House of Peers on the question on whom the crown should be conferred, and at first inclined to a regency ; but with a commendable delicacy he absented himself on the night of the decisive vote on the vacancy of the throne. He voted, however, on the 6th of February, for the resolution which settled the crown on William and Mary ; and he assisted at their coronation, under the title of Earl of Marlborough, to which he had shortly before been elevated by William.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
41-45.

After the Revolution was over, Churchill, who shall hereafter be called by his historic name of Marlborough, took little part in public affairs, except to use his endeavours to obtain a larger settlement on the Princess Anne than the necessities or parsimony of William was inclined to allow her. As the King had a civil list of no less than £600,000 a-year settled on him, it was hoped he would have made no difficulty in continuing the allowance of £30,000 a-year, which she had enjoyed under her father. William, however, showed great reluctance to do this ; and, in consequence, the friends of the Princess appealed to Parliament, and claimed £70,000 a-year. After much altercation, she succeeded in obtaining £50,000 a-year, chiefly in consequence of the efforts and influence of the Earl and Countess of Marlborough, to whom the Princess Anne, as well she might, testified the utmost gratitude on the occasion ; and, in token of it, settled on the latter a pension of £1000 a-year, which was at first refused by the Countess, but at length accepted through the representations of Lord Godolphin.² Though this circumstance produced a temporary coolness between the King and Marlborough,

16.
His efforts
to obtain a
settlement
for the
Princess
Anne.

² Coxe, i.
44, 45.

CHAP. his military services were too important to be dispensed
I. with in the field.

17.
His first
services in
foreign war
under Wil-
liam.

England having, in 1689, joined the Continental league against France, Marlborough received the command of the British auxiliary force in the Netherlands, and by his courage and ability contributed in a remarkable manner to the victory of Walcourt. The post bearing that name was confided to Marlborough, with a force composed partly of British, partly of foreign troops; and with these he not only checked the advance of the French till Prince Waldeck, with the main body of the Allies, could advance to his support, but, when they did arrive, by a vigorous attack on the flank of the enemy essentially contributed to his defeat. So sensible was Prince Waldeck of the importance of his service on this occasion, that he said publicly that "Marlborough had manifested greater talents in a single battle than generals of longer experience had shown in many years;" and William, in an autograph letter to his young general, ascribes mainly to his courage and capacity the success which had been gained.¹ *

¹ Coxe, i.
44-48.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
55-57.

18.
His short
campaign
in Ireland
in 1690.

In 1690 he received orders to return from Flanders, in order to assume a command in Ireland, then agitated by a general insurrection in favour of James; but, actuated by some remnant of attachment to his old benefactor, he eluded on various pretences complying with the order till the battle of the Boyne had extinguished the hopes of the dethroned monarch, when he

* "I am very happy that my troops behaved so well in the affair of Walcourt. It is to you that this advantage is principally owing. You will please accordingly to accept my thanks, and rest assured that your conduct will induce me to confer on you still further marks of my esteem and friendship, on which you may always rely."— *William to Marlborough*, 13th September 1689. COXE, i. 48, *note*.

embarked with 5000 men at Portsmouth. with which he landed near Cork, on 21st September. He at first had some difficulties, from the jealousy of the Continental troops and generals with whom he had to co-operate ; but his suavity of manners soon overcame these obstacles, and in a short but brilliant campaign of thirty-seven days, he reduced Cork, with a garrison of 5000 men, and Kinsale, cut off the communications of the insurgents with France, and threw them back into the province of Ulster, where they could not subsist without the utmost difficulty. On his return from this brilliant expedition he was received with great distinction by the King, who said, "I know no man who has served so few campaigns equally fit to command."¹

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1.

¹ Coxe, i.
49, 50, 51.
Hist. de
Marlbo-
rough, i.
59, 65.

In 1691 he was again sent into Flanders, in order to act under the immediate orders of William, who was then, with heroic constancy, contending with the still superior forces of France. Here, as usual, his military sagacity and foresight displayed themselves. Among other suggestions, he strongly recommended measures for the security of Mons as the barrier of Flanders ; but his advice was overlooked, and the place was lost. It was afterwards rendered a fortress of the first order by Wellington. During this campaign, however, his merit led discerning judges to foretell his future celebrity. Among others, the Prince of Vaudmont, being asked by the King to give his opinion on the character of the English generals, said, "Kirk has fire, Lanier thought, Mackay skill, and Colchester bravery ; but there is something inexpressible in the Earl of Marlborough. All their virtues seem to be united in his single person. I have lost my wonted skill in physiognomy if any subject of your Majesty can ever attain such a height of

19.
His services
in 1691 in
Flanders.

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I.

military glory as that to which this combination of perfections must raise him in whom they are united.” “Cousin,” replied William, “you have done your part in answering my question, and I believe the Earl of Marlborough will do his to verify your prediction.” He stood high at this time in the favour of the monarch, and was the object of general admiration, especially after he returned with William from Flanders, in October 1691. But these flattering prospects were of short duration ; and all England was thrown into alarm by his sudden arrest, on 5th May 1692, along with Lord Middleton and the Lords Griffin and Dunmore, and Sir John Fenwick, known partisans of the Stuart family, on a charge of high treason.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 49, 50, 57, 63. Hist. de Marlborough, i. 59-68.

20.
Discredit-
able in-
trigues soon
after with
the exiled
royal fa-
mily.

Upon this part of the history of Marlborough there hangs a veil of mystery, which all the papers brought to light in more recent times have not entirely removed. At the time, his disgrace was by many attributed to some cutting sarcasms in which he had indulged on the predilection of William for the Continental troops, and especially the Dutch ; by others, to the efforts made by Lady Marlborough and him to obtain for the Princess Anne a larger pension than the King was disposed to allow her. But neither of these causes are sufficient to explain the fall and arrest of a man so eminent as Marlborough, and who had rendered such important services to the newly-established monarch. It would appear, from what has transpired in later times, that a much more serious cause had produced the rupture between him and William. The charge brought against him at the time, but not prosecuted—as it was found to rest on false or insufficient evidence—was that of having, along with Lords Salisbury, Cornbury, the Bishop of

Rochester, and Sir Basil Ferebrace, signed the scheme of an association for the restoration of James. Sir John Fenwick, who was executed for a treasonable correspondence with James II. in 1694, long after Marlborough's arrest, declared, in the course of his trial, that he had been privy to the design, had received the pardon of the exiled monarch, and had engaged to procure for him the adhesion of the army. The papers published by Coxe rather corroborate the view that he was privy to it; and it is supported by those found at Rome in the possession of Cardinal York.* That Marlborough, disgusted with the partiality of William for his Dutch troops, and irritated at the open severity of his government, should have repented of his abandonment of his former sovereign and benefactor, is highly

* "About a fortnight ago, I wrote a letter to acquaint you with what I had observed of some people, in hopes Mr Arden would have called upon me as he promised; but I did not care to send it by post, so it was burnt. *We had yesterday Sir John Fenwick at the house*, and I think it all went as you could wish. I do not send you the particulars, knowing you must have it more exactly from others; but I should be wanting if I did not let you know that Lord Rochester has behaved himself, on all this occasion, like a friend. In a conversation he had with me, he expressed himself as a real servant of yours; and I think it would not be amiss if you took notice of it to him. *If you think me capable of any commands*, I shall endeavour to approve myself what I am, with much truth," &c.—*Marlborough to the Duke of Shrewsbury* (a Catholic leader and Royalist)—*Wednesday night*—no date. *Shrewsbury Papers*; and COXE, i. 85.

"During the interval between the liberation of Marlborough and the death of Queen Mary, we find him, in conjunction with Godolphin and many others, maintaining a clandestine intercourse with the exiled family. On the 2d May 1694, only a few days before he offered his services to King William, he communicated to James, through Colonel Sackville, intelligence of an expedition then fitting out for the purpose of destroying the fleet in Brest harbour."—COXE's *Marlborough*, i. 75. "Marlborough's conduct to the Stuarts," says Lord Mahon, "was a foul blot on his memory. To the last he persevered in those deplorable intrigues. In October 1713 he protested to a Jacobite agent he would rather have his hands cut off than do anything to prejudice King James."—MAHON, i. 21, 22.

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probable. But it can scarcely be taken as an apology for one act of treason, that he meditated the commission of another. It only shows how perilous, in public as in private life, is any deviation from the path of integrity, that it impelled such a man into so tortuous and disreputable a path.*

21.
He is liberated from prison, and ere long restored to favour.

But Marlborough was a man whose services were too valuable to the newly-established dynasty to be permitted to remain long in disgrace; and, fortunately for him, he was not so openly implicated with the conspirators as to have furnished the Government with adequate evidence to bring him to trial.† He was soon liberated from the Tower, as no sufficient evidence of his alleged accession to the conspiracy had been obtained; but he was not restored for a considerable time to rank or honours. The reason was, that, although the charge on which he was originally apprehended had been proved to be a forgery, there was good reason to believe that he was no stranger to a clandestine correspondence with the exiled family. Several years elapsed before he emerged

* "Under the apparent influence of these considerations, Marlborough listened to the overtures of the exiled monarch as early as the commencement of 1691; and through Colonel Sackville and Mr Bulkely, two of the Jacobite agents, he testified, in the most unqualified terms, his contrition for his past conduct, and anxiety to make amends for his defection. From this period both he and his friend Godolphin occasionally maintained a clandestine intercourse with the court of St Germain, and even made many communications on the state of public affairs and domestic transactions. On this intercourse we do not mean to throw the slightest doubt."—COXE, i. 54.

† Marlborough, and the other noblemen implicated in the charges against him, was imprisoned in consequence of an atrocious scheme formed by one R. A. Young, then imprisoned in Newgate for non-payment of a fine. This villain, who was expert in the counterfeiting of hands, drew up an association, to which he appended the forged signatures of the Earls of Marlborough and Scandale, the Bishop of Rochester, Lord Cornbury, and Sir Basil Ferebrace. He forged also several letters from Marlborough; and, by the agency of a

from the privacy into which he prudently retired on his liberation from confinement. Queen Mary having been carried off by the small-pox on the 17th of January 1696, Marlborough wisely abstained from even taking part in the debates which followed in Parliament, during which some of the malcontents dropped hints as to the propriety of conferring the crown on his immediate patroness, the Princess Anne. This prudent reserve, together with the absence of any decided proofs at the time of Marlborough's correspondence with James, seems to have at length weakened William's resentment, and by degrees he was taken back into favour. The peace of Ryswick, signed on the 20th of September 1697, having consolidated the power of that monarch, Marlborough was, on the 19th of June 1698, made preceptor of the young Duke of Gloucester, nephew of William, son of the Princess Anne, and heir-presumptive to the throne; and this appointment, which at once restored his credit at court, was accompanied by the gracious expression¹—"My lord, make my nephew to resemble yourself, and he will be

¹ COXE, i.
63, 75, 90.

confederate, Stephen Blackhead, he secreted the whole in the palace of the Bishop of Rochester, at Bromby, in Kent. On the affidavit of Young, who himself gave the information, the palace was searched, and, the papers being found, the supposed delinquents were arrested. The forgery was instantly discovered on Young's being confronted with the Bishop of Rochester; and the accused were all accordingly immediately liberated, with the exception of Marlborough, who was detained till the 15th June, when he was liberated on bail. Young was severely punished for the offence, and afterwards executed on another charge. He confessed with great contrition, when about to suffer death, that he had obtained Marlborough's signature and seal by writing to him under the name of a country gentleman, to inquire the character of a domestic who had lived in his service. Marlborough himself acknowledged, when the forged papers were shown him, that the handwriting was such as would have deceived even himself, had he not been conscious he had never signed such an instrument.—See COXE, i. 63, 69, 70, and authorities quoted, p. 70.

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everything which I can desire." On the same day he was restored to his rank as a privy councillor, and took the oaths and his seat accordingly.

22.
Marriage
of Marlbo-
rough's two
daughters.

At this period the family of Marlborough consisted of one son, John, afterwards Marquis of Blandford, and four daughters. The two eldest, Henrietta and Anne, being now marriageable, their beauty and accomplishments attracted a number of admirers; but their parents wisely put no restraint upon their inclinations, allowing nature to speak and determine for itself. It was with sincere pleasure, therefore, that they beheld a growing attachment between Mr Godolphin, son of Lord Godolphin, and the Lady Henrietta. The Princess Anne, who was warmly interested in the match, offered to settle on her a marriage portion of £10,000; but Lord and Lady Marlborough would only accept of £5000; adding, however, themselves the like sum to the munificent gift of the Princess. The marriage, thus supported, took place in 1698, when the young lady had attained her eighteenth year. Not long after, a proposal of marriage was made for Lady Anne, the second daughter, by Lord Spencer, the only son of Lord Sunderland—a young man of bold independent character, but of harsh and unprepossessing manners. Marlborough at first was averse to the match; but, by the influence of his Countess, his objections were at length removed, and the marriage was solemnised at St Alban's in January 1699, the Princess Anne bestowing the same munificent sum on the bride which she had done on her elder sister, and Marlborough, in like manner, equalising their portions.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
90-93.

On Marlborough's restoration to favour, he conducted himself with prudence and judgment, which gradually removed the apprehensions of William, and at length

put an end to the estrangement which had subsisted between them since his arrest. He was one of the few to whom the monarch, in the anguish of his heart, when his Dutch guards were removed by a vote of the House of Commons, imparted his thoughts of resigning a throne which had exposed him to such repeated mortifications, and where his patriotic designs were so often thwarted by party violence. He took an active part in the warm discussions which took place on the liquidation of the debt to the Prince of Denmark—a service which was gratefully acknowledged by both that Prince and the Princess. Though occasional fits of distrust on the part of the King succeeded, he continued steadily to advance in his confidence, and was consulted by him in all the most important measures and changes which took place; and this mutual trust increased, when the death of Charles II., king of Spain, which took place on 1st November 1700, without heirs, left no doubt that the great question of the Spanish succession could be determined only by the sword—and the bequest of that imbecile monarch in favour of the Duke of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin of France, made it apparent that the whole gigantic power of Louis XIV. would be thrown into the scale, to secure the immense acquisition to the house of Bourbon.¹

So fully had Marlborough during this period regained the confidence of William that he was three times named one of the nine lords-justiciars to whom the administration of affairs in Great Britain was subsequently intrusted, during the temporary absence of William in Holland; and the War of the Succession having become certain in the year 1700, that monarch, who was preparing to take an active part in it, appointed Marlborough, on 1st June 1701, his ambassador-extraordinary

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23.
Marlborough's conduct when restored to favour.

¹ Coxe, i. 99-108. Hardwicke Papers, ii. 362. Dalrymple, iii. 130.

24.
And appointed to the supreme command in the Netherlands.

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at the Hague, and commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in Flanders. This double appointment in effect invested Marlborough with the entire direction of affairs, civil and military, so far as England was concerned, on the Continent. William, who was highly indignant at the recognition of the Chevalier St George as King of England, on the death of his father, James II., in September 1701, was preparing to prosecute the war with the vigour and perseverance which so eminently distinguished his character, when he was carried off by the effects of a fall from his horse, on the 19th March 1702. So entirely had the ability and address of Marlborough removed William's coldness before his death that his dying advice to the Princess Anne, his successor, was to intrust him with the entire direction of affairs, both civil and military. This advice was immediately acted upon. The Princess Anne, with whom, both individually and through Lady Marlborough, he was so intimately connected, mounted the throne without opposition; and by one of her first acts the Queen bestowed on Marlborough the Order of the Garter, confirmed him in his former offices, and appointed him, in addition, her plenipotentiary at the Hague. War was declared on the 15th May 1702, and Marlborough immediately went over to the Netherlands to take the command of the Allied army, sixty thousand strong, then lying before Nimeguen, which was threatened by a superior force on the part of the French.¹

¹ Ledyard, i.
136. Coxe,
i. 126-140.

25.
Great diffi-
culties
Marlbo-
rough expe-
rienced in
constructing
the alliance.

It was not without the utmost difficulty, however, and no small exertions of his wonted ability and address, that Marlborough succeeded in arranging the terms and conditions of this alliance, which afterwards wrought such wonders for the deliverance of Europe. The

jealousies and animosities which so often appear in the outset of such alliances raged with even greater than usual violence, and had wellnigh prevented the formation of the confederacy. A subsidiary treaty had been signed with Denmark before William's death; but Marlborough's views extended to the including the whole Empire, Sweden, and even Russia, in the common cause. After great difficulties, a convention was concluded with Charles XII. of Sweden, by which, in consideration of 200,000 crowns paid down, and 300,000 more agreed to be paid, Sweden was detached from the French alliance, into which she had been wellnigh drawn by the diplomacy and gold of Louis XIV., and preserved at least a harmless neutrality. A much more serious difficulty was experienced in arranging the number of troops which each of the confederates should furnish, to set on foot a respectable force. Marlborough, well knowing the paramount importance of this object, was indefatigable in his efforts to stimulate the spirit, and stifle the selfishness of the several Allied powers, whose ministers were assembled at the Hague; and such was the ability with which his exertions were conducted that all difficulties were at length surmounted, and the *denombrement*, or amount of troops to be provided by each power, finally settled—being 90,000 for the Emperor, 10,000 for Holland, and 40,000 for England.¹

¹ Hist. de Marlborough, i. 116-120. Coxe, i. 120-123.

It is at this period, June 1702, that the great and memorable, and withal blameless period of Marlborough's life commenced. The next ten years were one unbroken series of efforts, victories, and glory. He arrived in the camp at Nimeguen on the evening of the 2d July, having been a few weeks before at the Hague, and immediately assumed the command. Lord Athlone, who had

^{26.} At which period the Blenheim Papers commenced.

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previously enjoyed that situation, at first laid claim to an equal authority with him ; but this ruinous division, which never is safe save with men so great as he and Eugene, and would unquestionably have proved ruinous to the common cause had Athlone been his partner in command, was prevented by the States-General, who insisted upon the undivided direction being conferred on Marlborough. Most fortunately, it is precisely at this period that the Despatches, recently published by Sir George Murray from the Blenheim Papers, commence, which present an unbroken series of his letters to persons of every description down to his dismissal from office in May 1712. They thus embrace the early successes in Flanders ; the cross-march into Bavaria, and battle of Blenheim ; the expulsion of the French from Germany ; the battle of Ramillies, and taking of Brussels and Antwerp ; the mission to the King of Sweden at Dresden ; the battle of Almanza in Spain ; those of Oudenarde, Malplaquet, and all the sieges in Flanders ; and all the important events of the war down to its close. More weighty and momentous events never fell to the lot of the historian or the biographer to record ; and their importance will not be properly appreciated if the previous condition of Europe, and the imminent hazard to the independence of all the adjoining states, from the unmeasured ambition and vast power of Louis XIV., are not taken into consideration.

Accustomed as we are to regard the Bourbons as a fallen and unfortunate race, the objects rather of commiseration than apprehension, and Napoleon as the only sovereign who has really threatened our independence, and all but effected the subjugation of the Continent, we can scarcely conceive the terror with which, a century

27.
Great
power of the
Bourbons
at this pe-
riod, and
general
alarm which
it excited.

and a half ago, the monarch of that race, with reason, inspired all Europe, or the narrow escape which the Continental states, at least, then made from being reduced to the condition of provinces of France. The forces of that monarchy, at all times formidable to its neighbours from the warlike spirit of its inhabitants, and their rapacious disposition, conspicuous alike in the earliest and the latest times*—its central situation forming, as it were, the salient angle of a bastion projecting into the centre of Germany—and its numerous population, were then in a peculiar manner to be dreaded, from the concentration of the elements of power thus afforded in the hands of an able and ambitious monarch, who had succeeded, for the first time for two hundred years, in healing the divisions and stilling the feuds of its nobles, and turning their buoyant energy into the channel of foreign conquest. He had attracted all that was noble and all that was able in France to Paris, and directed its accumulated energies there to the purposes of his ambition. The force thus assembled, and at the disposal of the French monarch, was more than equalled by the ability with which it was directed. Immense was the power which, in consequence of this able policy, was found to exist in France, and terrible the danger to which it at once exposed the neighbouring states.

France was rendered the more formidable, in the time of Louis XIV., from the remarkable talents which he himself possessed, and the unbounded ambition by which he was actuated, the extraordinary concentration of talent which his discernment or good fortune had collected around his throne, and the consummate abilities,

23.
Vast ability
by which
the govern-
ment of
France was
directed.

* "Galli turpe esse ducunt frumentum manu querere; itaque armati alienos agros demetunt."—CÆSAR.

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civil and military, with which affairs were directed. Turenne, Boufflers, and Condé were his generals ; Vauban was his engineer ; Louvois and Torcy were his statesmen. The lustre of the exploits of these illustrious men, in itself great, was much enhanced by the still greater blaze of fame which encircled his throne, from the genius of the literary men who have given such immortal celebrity to his reign. Corneille and Racine were his tragedians ; Molière wrote his comedies ; Bossuet, Fénelon, and Bourdaloue were his theologians ; Massillon his preacher ; Boileau his critic ; Le Notre laid out his gardens ; Le Brun painted his halls. Greatness had come upon France, as, in truth, it does to most other states, in all departments at the same time ; and the adjoining nations, alike intimidated by a power which they could not resist, and dazzled by a glory which they could not emulate, had come almost to despair of maintaining their independence, and were sinking into that state of apathy which is at once the consequence and the cause of extraordinary reverses.

29.
Extraordinary success which had hitherto attended Louis in all his enterprises.

The influence of these causes had distinctly appeared in the almost unbroken good fortune which had attended the enterprises of Louis, and the numerous conquests he had made since he had launched into the career of foreign aggrandisement. Nothing had been able to resist his victorious arms. At the head of an army of 100,000 men, directed by Turenne, he had, in 1772, speedily overrun Flanders. Its fortified cities yielded to the science of Vauban, or the terrors of his name. The boasted barrier of the Netherlands was passed in a few weeks—hardly any of its far-famed fortresses made any resistance. The passage of the Rhine was achieved under the eyes of the monarch with

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little loss, and with melodramatic effect. One half of Holland was soon subdued, and the presence of the French army at the gates of Amsterdam seemed to pre-
 sage immediate destruction to the United Provinces ; and, but for the firmness of their leaders, and a fortunate combination of circumstances, unquestionably would have done so. The alliance with England in the early part of his reign, and the junction of the fleets of Britain and France to ruin their fleets and blockade their harbours, seemed to deprive these States of their last resource, derived from their energetic industry. Nor were substantial fruits awaiting from these conquests. Alsace and Franche Comté were overrun, and, with Lorraine, permanently annexed to the French monarchy ; and although, by the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nimeguen, part of the acquisitions of Louis in Flanders were abandoned, enough was retained by the devouring monarchy to deprive the Dutch of the barrier they had so ardently desired, and render their situation to the last degree precarious in the neighbourhood of so formidable a power.

It was the ambition and detestable cruelty of the Church of Rome which first produced, and probably alone could have produced, a reaction against these dangers. Intoxicated with the success which had in many quarters attended its efforts, and in an especial manner in France, for the extirpation of heresy, its leaders thought nothing could resist their power. The long triumphs and well-known orthodoxy of Louis XIV. gave them the greatest hopes that he would employ his vast power and great capacity in effecting that unity in the Church which he had so long laboured to produce in the temporal administration of his monarchy ; while

30.
 Hopes and schemes of the Catholic party throughout Europe at this time. Their ultimate failure.

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the secret inclinations of James II., revealed to his spiritual guides, made the leaders of the Romish Church aware that he was resolutely bent on re-establishing their faith in his dominions, or at least in restoring it to such a degree of power and consideration as, with so aspiring a body, would have amounted, in effect, to the same thing. His character—bold, sincere, and enterprising, but withal rash, bigoted, and inconsiderate—appeared to promise the fairest chance of success to such a design. The moment seemed beyond all hope favourable for a general aggression on the Protestant faith; for in France there was an able and powerful monarch, who considered, and perhaps with reason, unity in religion as indispensable to his great object of centralisation in temporal power; and in England a devout and daring Catholic was on the throne, whose efforts, supported by a considerable party in Great Britain, and a very large one in Ireland, promised ere long to render the British empire, hitherto the stronghold of the Reformed, the chief outwork of the ancient faith. The two rival powers, whose jealousy and conflicting pretensions had so long desolated Europe, and whose opposite creeds had recently still more widely severed them from each other, were now united in close alliance, under governments alike anxious for the restoration of unity in matters of religion. And yet, so short-sighted are often the conclusions of human sagacity, even when founded on the most apparently reasonable grounds, or so entirely are they overruled by a superior Power, that to the consequences of this very aggression may be traced, by a clear chain of causes and effects, the curbing of the power of Louis XIV., and the establishment of the Reformed faith on a solid foundation in the north of Europe.

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31.

Simultaneous attacks on the Protestants in France and England irrevocably separate the two countries.

The onset of the Church of Rome against that of Luther commenced in both countries about the same time. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked by Louis XIV., and those sanguinary military executions began which have reflected such disgrace on his reign. Such was the spirit of bigotry and ecclesiastical ambition which at this period actuated the French Roman Catholic prelates, that not only was this inhuman persecution, the most widespread and terrible which Europe had yet seen, directly instigated by their advice, but it was publicly lauded as an act of unprecedented wisdom by the brightest ornament of their Church.* In 1687 the persecution of the Protestants, and measures evidently designed for the re-establishment of the Romish faith, commenced in Great Britain. The result was different in the two countries. In France, 400,000 weeping citizens were sent into exile,

* "Let us not delay," says Bossuet in his funeral oration on M. le Tellier, the Chancellor of France and principal author of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—"let us not delay to publish this miracle of our days: let us transmit its wonders to future ages. Take up your sacred pens, ye annalists of the Church, ready instruments of a prompt writer and a diligent hand: hasten to place Louis on a level with the Constantines and Theodosiuses of antiquity. Our fathers had not seen, as we have done, an inveterate heresy fall all at once; the misled flocks returning in crowds, and our churches too narrow to receive them; their false pastors abandoning them without even awaiting the order to do so, and happy to have to allege their sentence of banishment as an excuse. Everything calm in so great a movement; the universe astonished to see, in an event so new, the mark the most assured, as the noblest exercise, of authority, (*comme le plus bel usage de l'autorité*), and the merit of the Prince more generally recognised than his authority itself. Touched with such marvels, let our hearts overflow at the piety of Louis; let us raise our acclamations to Heaven, and say to that new Constantine, that new Marcian, that new Charlemagne, that which six hundred and thirty prelates said formerly in the council of Chalcedone—"You have secured the faith, *you have exterminated the heretics*;" it is the worthy work of your reign: it is its peculiar characteristic. Through you it is that heresy is no more. God alone could have performed such a miracle. King of the Heavens, preserve the King of the Earth: such is the prayer of the Church, such is the prayer of the bishops."—BOSSUET, *Oraison Funèbre de M. le Tellier*.

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who carried into foreign states their industry, their arts, their hatred of Roman Catholic oppression ; while 100,000 came to an untimely end in prisons, in hospitals, or in exile, of whom a tenth are said to have perished amidst the frightful torments of the stake or the wheel.* In England, the reigning dynasty was expelled from the throne, and carried to foreign courts the inextinguishable desire to regain its inheritance. Europe was permanently divided by these great events. The wrongs committed, the injuries suffered on both sides, were too great to be forgiven. On the one was a throne overturned, a race of sovereigns in exile ; on the other were half a million of persecuted human beings wandering in foreign lands. Temporal wrongs of the deepest dye had come to be superadded to religious divisions. Alliances on both parts followed, and revealed the vehement passions which were felt. The League of Augsburg, first signed on 9th July 1686, united Austria, Spain, Holland, Saxony, Swabia—to which, after the Revolution of 1688, was added England—against

* The most respectable of the Roman Catholic historians of the period, M. Capefigue, states the number of persons who were driven into exile by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, from information derived from the royal archives, at 230,000—the very number who were, a century after, expatriated by the decrees of the Convention. The property confiscated to the Crown produced of yearly rent 17,000,000 francs (£680,000) a-year.—See CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis XIV.*, ii. 258. The Protestant historians state the number of exiles at 400,000.—See SISMONDI, *Histoire des Français*, xxv. 514-522 ; BOULAINVILLIERS, *Etat de la France*, ii. 257. The King's circular to the commanders of provinces bore, "Sa Majesté veut qu' on fasse sentir les dernières rigueurs à ceux qui ne voudront pas se faire Catholiques, et ceux qui auront la sotte gloire de vouloir être les derniers doivent être poussés jusqu'à la dernière extrémité."—SISMONDI, *Histoire des Français*, xxvi. 519. "By this edict," says the Duke of St Simon, a courtier of Louis XIV., "without the slightest pretext, without the slightest necessity, a fourth of the kingdom was depopulated, its trade ruined, the country abandoned to the avowed and public pillage of dragoons, the innocent of both sexes were devoted to punishment and torture, and that by thousands ; families were stripped of

France; while Louis XIV. contracted an alliance of the closest kind with the exiled James, now established at St Germain's, entered into correspondence with the Jacobites and Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland, and commenced those dark intrigues at the court of Madrid which ere long led to the War of the Succession.

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The heroic William struggled not in vain for the independence of his country. The principal powers of Europe, at length awakened to a sense of their danger, made strenuous efforts to coerce the ambition of France. The revolution of 1688 had restored England to its natural place in the van of the contest for Continental freedom; and the peace of Ryswick in 1697 saw the trophies of conquest in some degree more equally balanced between the contending parties. But still it was with difficulty that the alliance kept its ground against Louis: any untoward event, the defection of any considerable power, would at once, it was felt, cast the balance in his favour; and all history had demonstrated

32.
Efforts of
William
III. to avert
the danger.

their possessions, relations armed against each other, our manufactures transferred to the stranger; the world saw crowds of their fellow-creatures, proscribed, naked, fugitive, guilty of no crimes, and yet seeking an asylum in foreign lands; not in their own country, which was in the mean time subjecting to the lash and the galleys the noble, the affluent, the aged, the delicate, and the weak, often distinguished not less by their rank than by their piety and virtue; and all this on no other account than that of religion. Still further to increase the horror of these proceedings, every province was filled with sacrilegious or perjured men, who were either forced or feigned to conform, and who sacrificed their consciences to their worldly interests and repose. In truth, such were the horrors produced by the combined operation of cruelty and obsequiousness, that within twenty-four hours men were frequently conducted from torture to abjuration, from abjuration to the communion-table, and in both cases attended by the common executioner."—*Mémoires de St Simon*, xiii. 113. Such was the practice of the most enlightened Catholic country, in its most enlightened age, and under its greatest sovereign—in the age of Corneille and Racine, of Massillon and Bossuet, of Boileau and Molière, of Vauban and Le Brun; and under the guidance of Louis XIV. and Louvois.

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how many are the chances against any considerable confederacy keeping for any length of time together, when the immediate danger which had stilled its jealousies, and bound together its separate interests, is in appearance removed. Such was the dubious and anxious state of Europe, when the death of Charles II. at Madrid, on the 1st November 1700, and the bequest of his vast territories to Philip, duke of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin, and grandson of Louis XIV., threatened at once to place the immense resources of the Castilian monarchy at the disposal of the ambitious monarch of France, whose passion for glory had not diminished with his advancing years, and whose want of moderation was soon evinced by his accepting, after an affected hesitation, the splendid bequest.

33.
Manner in
which the
bequest of
Spain to the
Duke of
Anjou had
been ob-
tained.

The manner in which this bequest in favour of the Bourbons had been brought about was very curious, and more creditable to the astuteness and ability of the diplomatists of Louis XIV. than to either the integrity or foresight of the Allied cabinets. At first sight, it seemed the most extraordinary thing imaginable that an Austrian prince, the descendant of Charles V., should have bequeathed his dominions to the grandson of Louis XIV., the hereditary enemy of his house, in preference to his own family, seated on the archducal throne of Austria. But the secret has been revealed by the publication, in later times, of the secrets of diplomacy, of which Smollett and our earlier writers were either ignorant, or which they were guilty of concealing.* It appears that the principal powers of Europe, aware of the approaching demise of the Spanish King without

* See SMOLLETT, vol. i. c. vii. § 37, where not a word is said of the formal treaty of partition of Spain.

descendants, had come not only to speculate on the chances of the succession, but had actually entered into secret treaties among each other for the partition of his dominions. In this nefarious scheme of spoliation, Louis XIV. and William III. of England took a prominent part, and the accession of Holland was obtained by promising her government a large share of the spoils. The earliest conference on the subject took place between the ambassadors of the three great powers at the time of the treaty of Ryswick, and the first formal treaty was signed at the Hague on 11th October 1698. By it the Spanish monarchy in the Peninsula was to be ceded to the Prince Electoral of Bavaria, with Flanders and the Low Countries. Naples, Sicily, Tuscany, and Guipuscoa fell to France, and the duchy of Milan to the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor of Germany. England, to its credit be it said, was to gain nothing by this partition.^{1*}

¹ Garden—
Hist. de
Traité de
Paix, ii.
223. Du-
mont, Corp.
Dip. vii.
442. Lam-
berty, i. 42.

Despite all the care the contracting parties took to keep this treaty secret, it transpired, and excited, as well it might, the most vehement indignation in the cabinets of Vienna and Madrid. William secretly informed the Emperor of its signature;† and the result of the deliberations of the Austrian family was, that the King of Spain made a testament, in which he bequeathed his whole dominions to the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, under the solemn injunction to resist any attempt at partition. Had this Prince lived, all the calamities which followed might have been averted; but his death, which happened on the 8th February 1699, threw

34.
Fresh treaty
of partition
between
France,
England,
and Hol-
land.

* See the treaty in *Mémoires de Torey*, P. i. p. 57; SisMONDI, *Hist. de France*, xxvi. 276; and CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis XIV.*, iv. 270-271.

† SisMONDI, xxvi. 277.

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everything open again, and exposed Spain afresh to the intrigues and cupidity of the Allied powers. Negotiations began afresh at the Hague; and on this occasion England became a participator in the expected spoil. The result was a second treaty of partition, signed on 13th March 1700, at the Hague, between England, France, and Holland, without the privity of the Emperor. By it the whole Spanish dominions were to be divided between the contracting parties in the following proportions: France was to receive Naples, Sicily, Guipuscoa, and Lorraine; the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor of Germany, was to obtain Spain, the Low Countries, and the Indies, on condition of renouncing any other succession. But, by secret articles annexed to this treaty, the Spanish colonies beyond seas were to be divided between England and Holland.* Both of the latter powers were at the moment in alliance with Spain, and had fought by her side in the very last war, which lasted from 1689 to 1697. It may safely be affirmed that a more infamous proceeding is not recorded in history; and it reveals the melancholy truth, that the human heart is ever the same under whatever banners it may be enlisted; and that, under the mask of zeal for liberty and the Reformed religion, may be concealed ambition as grasping, and perfidy as black, as ever lurked under the crown of kings, or the cowl of priestly tyranny.¹

¹ Garden, ii. 225. Dumont, vii. 477. Coxe, i. 109; and Coxe's Mem. of Bourbons of Spain, i. 58—Introduction.

* "Par des articles joints du traité, les Colonies Espagnoles étoient cédées à la Grande Bretagne et à la Hollande, seule avantage matérielle qu'elle et l'autre retiraient de ces stipulations. On donnoit beaucoup à la France, parceque Louis XIV. reconnaissait Guillaume III. et les gouvernemens nouveaux, qui veulent le faire admettre par les vœux sont obligés à des sacrifices."—CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.*, iv. 277; LAMBERTY, i. 97; SCHOELL, ii. 13-14.

Uniting duplicity towards his new allies, with ambition toward his old enemies, Louis had no sooner concluded this treaty than he secretly caused it to be communicated to Charles II., king of Spain, through his secretary-of-state. The intelligence threw the declining monarch, as well it might, into the utmost consternation. He addressed in vain the most pressing remonstrances to the cabinets of Versailles, London, and the Hague, pointing out, in just and emphatic terms, the glaring injustice of friendly and allied powers concluding a treaty for the partition of the dominions of a sovereign before he had yet sunk into the grave. It was all in vain. The ambition of France, England, and Holland was proof against every consideration of honour, or faith, or justice. The French ambassador at Madrid got orders to quit that capital; the Spanish ambassador at London received his passports; a large French army was collecting on the Guipuscoa frontier of the Pyrenees. War seemed inevitable; the fate which subsequently befell Poland appeared to threaten Spain the moment its present sovereign should be no more. In this extremity, Charles II. convened his Council of State, and submitted the matter to their decision. By a large majority, they determined that a bequest in favour of the Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV., was the most advisable step, as he was the only monarch capable of preventing a partition; and the old King, sacrificing the partiality of family and race to aroused indignation and sentiments of nationality, consented to do so, and signed the bequest which involved Europe in conflagration.¹ And thus by the cupidity and ambition of the Allied powers in forming treaties for the partition of Spain, even before the

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35.
The knowledge of this treaty of partition determines the King of Spain to the bequest in favour of the Bourbons.

¹ Schoell, Hist. des Traités, ii. 14, 15. Coxe, i. 109.

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reigning monarch was yet in his grave, joined to the address of the French diplomatists, was the great European contest terminated in favour of France, and by a single deed the magnificent succession of the Spanish monarchy was made over to the house of Bourbon.

36.
Extent of
the danger
which
threatened
the Conti-
nental
powers from
this acces-
sion to the
power of
France.

But though the origin of the evil was to be found in the unjustifiable ambition of France, England, and Holland, it was not the less real, or deserving of immediate consideration by the Allied powers. Threatened with so serious a danger, it is not surprising that the powers of Europe were in the utmost alarm, and ere long took steps to endeavour to avert it. All had injuries to avenge, or inheritances to regain. Austria armed to regain the Spanish succession, reft from its family by the ambition and diplomatic ability of the cabinet of Versailles. England had a double motive for hostility : she had danger to avert, and the mortification of being duped to avenge. Holland saw the enemy at her gates : the white flag floated on the bastions of Antwerp. Such, however, was the terror inspired by the name of Louis XIV., and the magnitude of the addition made by this bequest to his power, that the new monarch, in the first instance, ascended the throne of Spain and the Indies without any opposition. The Spanish Netherlands, so important both from their intrinsic riches, their situation as the certain theatre of war, and the numerous fortified towns with which they were studded, had been early secured for the young Bourbon prince by the Elector of Bavaria, who was at that time the governor of those valuable possessions. The distant colonies of the crown of Castile, in the East and West Indies, sent in their adhesion. Sardinia, Naples, Sicily, the Milanese, and the other Spanish possessions in Italy, speedily followed the example. The young Prince of Anjou made his

formal entry into Spain in the beginning of 1701, and was crowned at Madrid, under the title of Philip V. The principal Continental powers, with the exception of the Emperor of Germany, acknowledged his title to the throne. Bavaria united itself in a cordial alliance with France and Spain. The Dutch were in despair—they beheld the power of Louis XIV. brought to their frontier. Flanders, instead of being the barrier of Europe against France, had become the outwork of France against Europe. Bavaria was an important advanced post, which gave the armies of Louis an entrance into the heart of Germany. Italy, France, Spain, Flanders, and part of Germany, were united in one close league, and in fact formed but one dominion. It was the empire of Charlemagne over again, directed with equal ability, founded on greater power, and backed by the boundless treasures of the Indies. Spain had threatened the liberties of Europe in the end of the sixteenth century; France had all but overthrown them in the close of the seventeenth. What hope was there of being able to make head against them both, united under such a monarch as Louis XIV.?

In addition to these grounds of apprehension from public causes, and the obvious danger to the liberties of Europe arising from the junction of France and Spain under one influence, there were other circumstances of a more private, but not less pressing nature. James II., the exiled King of England, died on the 16th September 1701, and his son was immediately acknowledged as King of Great Britain and Ireland by Louis XIV. This decisive act had a most marked effect both upon the deliberations of the cabinet of St James's and the feelings of the British people. It was a distinct and public

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37.
Death of
James II.,
and ac-
knowledg-
ment of the
Pretender
by Louis
XIV.

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declaration of war, not only against the reigning monarch, but against the established religion of Great Britain. The exiled Prince was an avowed Roman Catholic; and the monarch who had acknowledged him was not only of the same persuasion, but the greatest persecutor of the Protestants that had ever appeared in Europe. The support of the reigning dynasty thus became a matter of absolute necessity to the great majority in the British islands, who were attached to the Reformed faith. War with France, now united with Spain, seemed the only mode of averting, not only the destruction of the national liberties, but the ruin of the national faith. The result of this danger was a return of William to his old supporters the Whigs; and he acted with consummate address in taking advantage of the change in his and their favour. Parliament soon evinced the temper of the nation. The speech from the Throne, in terms of simple and manly eloquence, described the affront offered to the nation by this attempt, on the part of a foreign power, to impose on it a sovereign and a religion contrary to its expressed determination. The Peers answered by a loyal address, signed by seventy—at that time a great majority—of all shades of party and opinion in that dignified assembly. In the Commons, the moderate Tories vied with the Whigs in professions of zeal and patriotism. The treaties with foreign powers, which William had concluded, were received with the most unqualified approbation, and supplies then deemed liberal were voted for the prosecution of the war.¹

¹ Coxo, i.
125-129.

33.
Death of
William
III.

Great as the dangers of the period were, they had no effect in daunting the heroic spirit of William III. In concert with the Emperor and the United Provinces, who were too nearly threatened to be backward in

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falling into his views, he laboured for the formation of a great confederacy, which might prevent the union of the crowns of France and Castile in one family, and prevent, before it was too late, the consolidation of a power which threatened to be so formidable to the liberties of Europe; and he had nearly succeeded in the attempt, chiefly by the great abilities and admirable address of Marlborough at the Hague. But the hand of Fate was on the curtain: new actors were about to appear on the stage of human affairs. The health of William had been long declining, and the vigour of his mind struggled with difficulty against the increasing weakness of his frame. His death was accelerated by an accidental fall from his horse, occasioned by its starting at a mole, while hunting in the park at Hampton Court. During his mortal illness, the clearness of his intellect remained unabated; and his last act, a few hours before his death, was signing his name to the bill of abjuration of the Pretender and his heirs. Such had been the zeal which Marlborough had manifested in concluding the treaties of alliance, and the address with which he had overcome the jealousies of the coalesced sovereigns, that William's coldness towards him had been completely dissipated; and the latest advice which he gave to his successor was a strong recommendation of him as the most proper person either to direct her councils or to lead her armies, and the only one whose capacity was equal to the crisis which was evidently approaching.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
139, 140.

ANNE, who succeeded without opposition to the throne, in terms of the act settling the succession, had suffered great distress, arising from a contention of feelings before that event took place. Indecision, that prolific source of inquietude to a feeble mind, had preyed upon her

39.
Accession
of Anne,
and her
favour to
Marlbo-
rough.

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March 8,
1702.

thoughts, and come seriously to affect her health. It is not surprising it was so : the crisis was such as might have staggered a stronger mind and a more masculine spirit. On the one hand, respect for her father, affection to her brother, prompted her to make way for the exiled line : on the other, duty to her religion, patriotism towards her country, prompted her to accept the proffered crown. She had privately communicated to her father the intelligence of her son's death, when it occurred some years before, and solicited his sanction of her acceptance of the crown, offering at the same time, when an opportunity opened, to make restitution. James positively refused to do so, or accede to any such compromise ; and this augmented the anxiety and irresolution of Anne. Indeed, it was chiefly to overcome these difficulties, and prevent the great work of the Revolution from being defeated by her refusal of the crown on his death, that William had some time before procured the Act of Settlement to be passed by both Houses of Parliament, which, after Anne, entailed the crown on the house of Hanover. When the succession actually opened, however, her mind had been made up ; and the influence of Marlborough speedily appeared in the first measure of her Government. Three days after her accession, he was made a Knight of the Garter, and appointed Captain-General of the English forces at home and abroad, and soon after Master-General of the Ordnance. The Countess of Marlborough was at the same time made Mistress of the Robes and Ranger of Windsor Forest, and her two daughters, Lady Harriet Godolphin and Lady Spencer, Ladies of the Bedchamber.¹

The death of William, which, had it taken place earlier, might have prevented the formation of the

¹ McPherson, ii. 130.
Clarke's
Life of
James II.,
ii. 559.
Coxe, i.
111, 112,
142, 143.

confederacy, proved no impediment, but rather the reverse. His measures had been so well taken, his resolute spirit had laboured with such effect, that the alliance, offensive and defensive, between the Emperor, England, and Holland, had been already signed. The accession of the Princess Anne, without weakening its bonds, added another power, of no mean importance, to its ranks. Her husband, Prince George of Denmark, brought the forces of that kingdom to aid the common cause. Prussia soon after followed the example. On the other hand, Bavaria, closely connected with the French and Spanish monarchies, both by the influence of its jealousy of Austria, and by the government of the Netherlands, which its Elector held, adhered to France. Thus the forces of Europe were mutually arrayed and divided, much as they afterwards were in the coalition against Napoleon in 1813. It might already be foreseen that Flanders, the Bavarian plains, Spain, and Lombardy, would, as in the great contest which followed a century after, be the theatre of war. But the forces of France and Spain possessed this advantage, unknown in former wars, but immense in a military point of view, that they were in possession of the whole of the Netherlands, the numerous fortresses of which were alike valuable as a basis of offensive operations, and as affording asylums all but impregnable in cases of disaster. The Allied generals, whether they commenced their operations in Flanders or on the side of Germany, had to begin on the Rhine, and cut their way through the long barrier of fortresses with which the genius of Vauban had encircled the frontiers of the monarchy.

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 40.
 Comparative strength
 of the forces
 on the opposite
 sides.

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTERS OF LOUIS XIV., WILLIAM III., AND JAMES II.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE WAR.—CAMPAIGN OF 1702.

CHAP.

II.

1702.

1.

Strange diversity in the characters drawn by historians of Louis XIV.

LOUIS XIV., whose unmeasured ambition and diplomatic address had procured the splendid bequest of the Spanish succession for his family, was one of the most remarkable sovereigns who ever sat upon the throne of France. Yet there is none of whose character, even at this comparatively remote period, it is more difficult to form a just estimate. Beyond measure eulogised by the poets, orators, and annalists of his own age, who lived on his bounty, or were flattered by his address, he has been proportionally vilified by the historians, both foreign and national, of subsequent times. The Roman Catholic writers, with some truth, represent him as the champion of their faith, the sovereign who extirpated the demon of heresy in his dominions, and restored to the Church in undivided unity the realm of France. The Protestant authors, with not less reason, regard him as the deadliest enemy of their religion, and the cruellest foe of those who had embraced it; as a faithless tyrant, who scrupled not, at the bidding of bigoted priests, to violate the national faith plighted by the Edict of Nantes, and to persecute, with unrelenting severity, the unhappy people who, from conscientious

motives, had broken off from the Church of Rome. One set of writers paint him as a magnanimous monarch, whose mind, set on great things, and swayed by lofty desires, foreshadowed those vast designs which Napoleon, armed with the forces of the Revolution, afterwards for a brief space realised. Another set dwell on the foibles or the vices of his private character—depict him as alternately swayed by priests, or influenced by women; selfish in his desires, relentless in his hatred; and sacrificing the peace of Europe, and endangering the independence of France, for the gratification of personal vanity, or from the thirst of unbounded ambition.

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It is the fate of all men who have made a great and durable impression on human affairs, and powerfully affected the interests, or thwarted the opinion of large bodies of men, to be represented in these opposite colours to future times. The party, whether in Church or State, which they have elevated, the nation whose power or glory they have augmented, praise, as much as those whom they have oppressed and injured, whether at home or abroad, strive to vilify, their memory. But in the case of Louis XIV., this general propensity has been greatly increased by the opposite, and, at first sight, inconsistent features of his character. There is almost equal truth in the magniloquent eulogies of his admirers, and in the impassioned invectives of his enemies. He was not less great and magnanimous than he is represented by the elegant flattery of Racine or Boileau, nor less cruel and hard-hearted than he is painted by the austere justice of Sismondi or d'Aubigné.

2.
Which
arose from
the great-
ness of his
deeds.

Like some other men, but more so than most, he was made up of lofty and elevated, of selfish and frivolous qualities. He could alternately boast, with truth, that

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3.
Remarkable
diversities
and
seeming
contradictions
of his
character.

there was no longer any Pyrenees, and rival his youngest courtiers in frivolous and often heartless gallantry. In his younger years he was equally assiduous in his application to business, and carried away by personal vanity. When he ascended the throne, his first words were—"I intend that every paper, from a diplomatic despatch to a private petition, shall be submitted to me;" and his vast powers of application enabled him to compass the task. Like Louis Philippe, he was his own prime minister; and even when he acted through others, he never failed to communicate the impress of his own lofty mind and great capacity to the conduct of all his subordinate authorities. From the magnificent publication lately given to the world by the French Government, and his correspondence with his generals there preserved, it is evident that he rivalled Napoleon himself in the vigilant superintendence which he kept up over all his officers, and the skill with which he directed, from his cabinet at Versailles, the movements of his armies at once in Flanders and Germany, Italy and Spain.* Discerning in the choice of his ministers—swayed only, at least in matters of state, by powerful intellects—patriotic and unselfish in the choice of his ministers—he collected round himself the first talent in France, and yet preserved his ascendancy over them all. Yet, at the same time, he deserted his Queen for Madame la Vallière, and soon after broke La Vallière's heart by abandoning her for Madame de Montespan, and in the end forgot both in the arms of Madame de Maintenon.

* See "*Histoire Militaire de la Guerre de la Succession*, 10 vols., 4to. Paris, 1836-1849. Publiée par ordre du Roi; arrangée par M. le Lieut.-Général PELET," where all the original documents relative to the war are given. A splendid work, to which this biography is, as will appear in the sequel, largely indebted.

In mature life, his ambition to extend the bounds and enhance the glory of France was equalled by his desire to win the admiration or gain the favour of the fair sex. In his later days, he alternately engaged in devout austerities with Madame de Maintenon, and, with mournful resolution, asserted the independence of France against Europe in arms. Never was evinced a more striking exemplification of the saying, so well known among men of the world, that no one is a hero to his valet-de-chambre; nor a more remarkable confirmation of the truth, so often proclaimed by divines, that characters of imperfect goodness constitute the great majority of mankind.

That he was a great man, as well as a successful sovereign, is decisively demonstrated by the mighty changes which he effected in his own realm, as well as in the neighbouring states of Europe. When he ascended the throne, France, though it contained the elements of greatness, had not yet become great. It had been alternately wasted by the ravages of the English, and torn by the fury of the religious wars. The insurrection of the Fronde had shortly before involved the capital in all the horrors of civil conflict; barricades had been erected in the streets; alternate victory and defeat had by turns elevated and depressed the rival factions. Turenne and Condé had displayed their consummate talents in miniature warfare within sight of Nôtre-Dame. Never had the monarchy been depressed to a greater pitch of weakness than during the reign of Louis XIII. and the minority of Louis XIV. But from the time the latter sovereign ascended the throne, order seemed to arise out of chaos. The ascendancy of a great mind—as in India, when Marquis Wellesley

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4.

Vast
changes
which he
effected on
France dur-
ing his
reign.

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assumed the government—soon made itself felt in every department. Civil war ceased; rival factions disappeared; even the bitterness of religious hatred seemed for a time to be stilled by the influence of patriotic feeling. The energies of France, drawn forth during the agonies of civil conflict, were turned to public objects and the career of national aggrandisement—as those of England had been after the conclusion of the Great Rebellion, by the firm hand and magnanimous mind of Cromwell. From a pitiable state of anarchy, that glorious realm at once appeared on the theatre of Europe, great, powerful, and united. It is no common capacity which can thus seize the helm and right the ship when it is reeling most violently, and the fury of contending elements has all but torn it in pieces. It is the highest proof of political capacity to discern the bent of the public mind, when most strongly excited, and, by falling in with the prevailing desire of the majority, to convert the desolating vehemence of social conflict into the steady passion for national advancement. Napoleon did this with the political aspirations of the eighteenth, Louis XIV. with the religious fervour of the seventeenth century.

5.
Which
arose from
his turn of
mind coin-
ciding with
the spirit of
the age.

It was because his character and turn of mind coincided with the national desires, at the moment of his ascending the throne, that this great monarch was enabled to achieve this marvellous transformation. If Napoleon was the incarnation of the Revolution, with not less truth it may be said that Louis XIV. was the incarnation of the monarchy. The feudal spirit, modified but not destroyed by the changes of time, appeared to be concentrated, with its highest lustre, in his person. He was still the head of the Franks—the lustre of the historic families yet surrounded his throne: but he was

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the head of the Franks only—that is, of a hundred and fifty thousand conquering warriors. Twenty millions of conquered Gauls were no further considered in his administration, than in so far as they augmented the national strength, or added to the national resources. But this distinction was then neither perceived nor regarded. Worn out with civil dissension, torn to pieces by religious passions, the fervent minds and restless ambition of the French longed for a *national* field for exertion—an arena in which social dissensions might be forgotten. Louis XIV. gave them this field—he opened this arena.

He ascended the throne at the time when this desire had become so strong and general as in a manner to concentrate on its objects the national will. His character, equally in all its parts, was adapted to the general want. He took the lead alike in the greatness and the foibles of his subjects. Were they ambitious? so was he :—were they desirous of renown? so was he :—were they set on national aggrandisement? so was he :—were they desirous of protection to industry? so was he :—were they prone to gallantry? so was he. His figure stately, and countenance majestic; his manner lofty and commanding; his conversation dignified, but enlightened; his spirit ardent, but patriotic—he was thus qualified to take the lead and preserve his ascendancy among a proud body of ancient nobles, whom the disasters of preceding reigns, and the astute policy of Cardinal Richelieu, had driven into the antechambers of Paris, but who preserved in their ideas and habits the pride and recollections of the conquerors who followed the banners of Clovis. And the great body of the people—proud of their sovereign, proud of his victories, proud

6.
His virtues
and vices
were alike
those of his
people.

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of his magnificence, proud of his fame, proud of his national spirit, proud of the literary glory which environed his throne, in secret proud of his gallantries—joyfully followed their nobles in the brilliant career which his ambition opened, and submitted to his government with as much docility as they had once ranged themselves round the banners of their respective chiefs on the day of battle.

7.
His govern-
ment was
essentially
feudal and
monarchi-
cal.

It was the peculiarity of the government of Louis XIV., arising from this fortuitous but to him fortunate combination of circumstances, that it united the distinctions of rank, family attachments, and ancient ideas of feudal times, with the vigour and efficiency of monarchical government, and the lustre and brilliancy of literary glory. Such a combination could not, in the nature of things, last long; it must soon work out its own destruction. In truth, it was sensibly weakened during the course of the latter part of the half century that he sat upon the throne. But, while it endured, it produced a most formidable union: it engendered an extraordinary and hitherto unprecedented phalanx of talent; it brought the power of mind, and the feelings of honour, to act together on the national fortunes. The feudal ideas still lingering in the hearts of the nation produced subordination; the national spirit, excited by the genius of the sovereign, induced unanimity; the development of talent, elicited by his discernment, conferred power; the literary celebrity, encouraged by his munificence, diffused fame. The peculiar character of Louis, in which great talent was united with great pride, and unbounded ambition with heroic magnanimity, qualified him to turn to the best account this singular combination of circumstances, and to unite in France, for a

brief period, the lofty aspirations and dignified manners of chivalry, with the energy of rising talent and the lustre of literary renown.

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Louis XIV. was essentially monarchical. That was the secret of his success ; it was because he first gave the powers of *unity* to the monarchy that he rendered France so brilliant and powerful. All his changes, and they were many, from the dress of soldiers to the instructions to ambassadors, were characterised by the same spirit. He first introduced a *uniform* in the army. Before his time, the soldiers merely wore a banderole over their steel breastplates and ordinary dresses. That was a great and symptomatic improvement ; it at once induced an *esprit de corps* and a sense of responsibility. He first made the troops march with a measured step, and caused large bodies of men to move with the precision of a single company. The artillery and engineer service, under his auspices, made astonishing progress. Never was a man who more thoroughly possessed that quality, invaluable in a sovereign, which discerns, and at once selects, ability in the public service. Here no prejudice misled, no jealousy arrested, no partiality blinded him. His discriminating eye selected the genius of Vauban, which invented, as it were, the modern system of fortification, and wellnigh brought it to its greatest elevation—and raised to the highest command that of Turenne, which carried the military art to the most consummate perfection. Skilfully turning the martial and enterprising genius of the Franks into the career of conquest, he multiplied tenfold their power, by conferring on them the inestimable advantages of skilled discipline and unity of action. He gathered the feudal array around his banner ; he roused the ancient barons from their

3.
Unity and
centralisa-
tion were
his great
objects.

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chateaux, the old retainers from their villages. But he arranged them in disciplined battalions of regular troops, who received the pay and obeyed the orders of government, and never left their colours. His regular army was all enrolled by voluntary enlistment, and served for pay. The militia alone was raised by conscription. When he summoned the military forces of France to undertake the conquest of the Low Countries, he appeared at the head of 120,000 men, all regular and disciplined troops, with 100 pieces of cannon. Modern Europe had never seen such an array. It was irresistible, and speedily brought the monarch to the gates of Amsterdam.

9.

His efforts
to improve
the public
administra-
tion.

The same unity which the genius of Louis and his ministers communicated to the military power of France, he gave also to its naval forces and internal strength. To such a pitch of greatness did he raise the marine of the monarchy that it all but outnumbered that of England : and the battle of La Hogue, in 1692, alone determined, as Trafalgar did a century after, to which of these rival powers the dominion of the seas was to belong. His Ordinances of the Marine, promulgated in 1681, form the best code of maritime law yet known, and one which is still referred to, like the Code Napoleon, as a ruling authority in all commercial states. He introduced astonishing reforms into the proceedings of the courts of law ; and to his efforts the great perfection of the French law, as it now appears in the admirable works of Pothier, is in a great degree to be ascribed. He reduced the government of the interior to that regular and methodical system of governors of provinces, mayors of cities, and other subordinate authorities, all receiving their instructions from the Tuileries,

which under no subsequent change of government, imperial or royal, has been abandoned, and which has, in every succeeding age, formed the main source of its strength. He concentrated around the monarchy the rays of genius from all parts of the country, and threw around its head a lustre of literary renown, which, more even than the exploits of his armies, dazzled and fascinated the minds of men.

He arrayed the scholars, philosophers, and poets of his dominions like soldiers and sailors; almost all the academies of France, which have since become so famous, were of his institution; he sought to give discipline to thought, as he had done to his fleets and armies, and rewarded distinction in literary efforts not less than warlike achievement. No monarch ever knew better the magical influence of intellectual strength on general opinion, or felt more strongly the expedience of enlisting it on the side of authority. Not less than Hildebrand or Napoleon, he aimed at drawing, not over his own country alone, but over the whole of Europe, the meshes of regulated and centralised thought; and more durably than either he attained his object. The religious persecution which constitutes the great blot on his reign, and caused its brilliant career to close in mourning, was the result of the same desire. He longed to give the same unity to the Church which he had done to the army, navy, and civil strength of the monarchy. He saw no reason why the Huguenots should not, at the royal command, face about like one of Turenne's battalions. Schism in the Church was viewed by him in exactly the same light as rebellion in the state. No efforts were spared by inducements, good deeds, and fair promises, to make proselytes; but when 1,200,000 Pro-

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10.

And to give
unity to
general
thought.

CHAP. testants resisted his seductions, the sword, the fagot, and
 II. the wheel were resorted to without mercy for their
 1702. destruction.

11.
 General re-
 semblance
 of his ideas
 of govern-
 ment to
 those of
 Napoleon.

Napoleon, it is well known, had the highest admiration of Louis XIV. Nor is this surprising : their principles of government and leading objects of ambition were the same. "*L'état—c'est moi,*" was the principle of the grandson of Henry IV. : "Your first duty is *to me*, your second to France," said the Emperor to his nephew, Prince Louis Napoleon. In different words, the idea was the same. To concentrate Europe in France, France in Paris, Paris in the government, and the government in himself, was the ruling idea of each. But it was no concentration for personal or unworthy purposes which was thus desired ; it was not for the gratification of vanity, or to multiply the seductions of sense, that the aggrandisement of the capital and the government was so eagerly pursued. It was for great and lofty objects that this undivided power was sought by both. It was neither to gratify the desire of an Eastern seraglio, nor exercise the tyranny of a Roman emperor, that either coveted unbounded authority. It was to exalt the nation of which they formed the head, to augment its power, extend its dominion, enhance its fame, magnify its resources, that they both deemed themselves sent into the world. It was the general sense that this was the object of their administration which constituted the strength of both. Equally with the philosophers of later times, they regarded society as a pyramid, of which the multitude formed the base, and the monarch the head. Equally with the most ardent democrat, they desired the augmentation of the national resources, the increase of public felicity. But

they both thought that these blessings must descend from the sovereign to his subject, not ascend from the subjects to their sovereign. "Every thing *for* the people, nothing *by* them," which Napoleon described as the secret of good government, was not less the maxim of the imperious despot of the Bourbon race.

The identity of their ideas, the similarity of their objects of ambition, appear in the monuments which both have left at Paris. Great as was the desire of the Emperor to add to its embellishment, magnificent as were his ideas in the attempt, he has yet been unable to equal the noble structures of the Bourbon dynasty. The splendid pile of Versailles, the glittering dome of the Invalides, still, after the lapse of a century and a half, overshadow all the other monuments in the metropolis; though the confiscations of the Revolution, and the victories of the Emperor, gave succeeding governments the resources of the half of Europe for their construction. The inscription on the arch of Louis, "Ludovico Magno," still seems to embody the gratitude of the citizens to the greatest benefactor of the capital; and it is not generally known that the two edifices which have added most since his time to the embellishment of the metropolis, and of which the Revolution and the Empire would fain take the credit—the Pantheon and the Madeleine—were begun in 1764 by Louis XV., and owe their origin to the magnificent ideas which Louis XIV. transmitted to his, in other respects, unworthy descendant.*

Had one dark and atrocious transaction not taken

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12.
Magnificent
ideas of each
as shown in
their public
works.

* "La Madeleine comme le Panthéon avait été commencée la même année en 1764, par les ordres de Louis XV., le roi des grands monumens, et dont le règne a été travesti par la petite histoire."—CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis Philippe*, viii. 281.

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13.
Atrocious of
the revoca-
tion of the
Edict of
Nantes.

place, the annalist might have stopped here, and painted the French monarch, with a few foibles and weaknesses, the common bequest of mortality, yet still, upon the whole, in public affairs, a noble and magnanimous ruler. His ambition, great as it was, and desolating as it proved, both to the adjoining states, and in the end to his own subjects, was the "last infirmity of noble minds." He shared it with Caesar and Alexander, with Charlemagne and Napoleon. Even his cruel and unnecessary ravaging of the Palatinate, though attended with dreadful private suffering, has too many parallels in the annals of military cruelty. His accession to the league of 1700 for the partition of Spain was a violent stretch of ambition, and carried into execution with equal duplicity and perfidy; but these were directed against the hereditary enemy of France, and the annals of diplomacy in all ages prove that violations of state morality are too frequent among governments. His personal vanities and weaknesses, his love of show, his passion for women, his extravagant expenses, were common to him with his grandfather, Henry IV.; they seemed inherent in the Bourbon race, and are the frailties to which heroic minds in every age have been most subject. But, for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the heart-rending cruelties with which it was carried into execution, no such apology can be found: it admits neither of palliation nor excuse. Were it not for the massacre of St Bartholomew, and the expulsion of the Morescoes from Spain, it would stand foremost in the annals of the world as an example of kingly perfidy and priestly cruelty.

The expulsion of 400,000 innocent human beings from their country, for no other cause but difference of religious opinion—the destruction of nearly 100,000,

of whom it is said a tenth perished by the frightful tortures of the wheel and the stake—the wholesale desolation of provinces and destruction of cities for conscience sake, never will and never should be forgotten. It is the eternal disgrace of the Roman Catholic religion—a disgrace to which the “execrations of ages have not yet affixed an adequate censure”—that all these infamous state crimes took their origin in the bigoted zeal, or sanguinary ambition of the Church of Rome. In truth the Romish is essentially and of necessity a persecuting and intolerant establishment. As it acknowledges only one faith, and regards all others as heresies, it *must* consider it as the first of sacred duties to extinguish them. Looking upon heresy and schism as crimes equal in dye to murder and robbery, and far more dangerous in their effects, it of necessity holds it equally a political and social obligation to crush them by the arm of the civil power, and by all the terrors of the most inhuman punishments. Thence the frightful crimes which have so often stained the annals of the Church of Rome. Nor have any of them passed without their just reward. The expulsion of the Moors, the most industrious and valuable inhabitants of the Peninsula, has entailed a weakness upon the Spanish monarchy which the subsequent lapse of two centuries has been unable to repair. The reaction against the Romish atrocities in France produced the great league of which William III. was the head; it sharpened the swords of Eugene and Marlborough; it closed in mourning the reign of Louis XIV. Nor did the national punishment stop here. The massacre of St Bartholomew, and revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were the chief among the remote but certain causes of the French Revolution, and all the unutterable

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11.

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14.

Which produced the reaction against him that checked his power.

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miseries which it brought both upon the Bourbon race and the professors of the Romish faith. Nations have no immortality ; their punishment is inflicted in this world ; it is visited with unerring certainty on the third and fourth generations. Providence has a certain way of dealing with the political sins of men—which is, to leave them to the consequences of their own actions.

15.
Parallel of
Napoleon
and Louis
XIV. in the
affections of
the heart.

The secret which furnishes the key to these dark stains on the character of Louis XIV., as it afterwards did to that of Napoleon, was the intense *selfishness* by which both were actuated. It is in their private life that the real motives of both appear ; their public career does not so clearly reveal them. Directed to state objects, and the advancement of the public interests, this principle led them alternately into great and glorious deeds, and cruel or infamous acts ; for their ambition was so wound up with the national glory that when they struck for themselves they struck for France. But in private life, and the intercourse of the affections, the innate selfishness of the dispositions of both appeared in clearer and more odious, because less disguised colours. Napoleon, it is well known, was extremely amorous in his disposition, and yielded to no man that ever lived in his desire of sensual enjoyment ; but his manners were so abrupt, that he scarce ever inspired the passions which he felt ; and his most ardent admirers admit that there was a *brusquerie* and precipitation in his manner, even towards the most refined of the sex, in private, which was destructive of all interest in the female heart. He was an entire stranger to the refined and chivalrous feelings, and regardless of those of the objects of his desire, provided his own were gratified. The selfishness of Louis XIV. took a different but not less

characteristic direction. A refined courtier, an accomplished gentleman, perfect in all the elegant exercises, dignified in his manners, chivalrous in his feelings, imposing in his person, he did not require the lustre of a throne to give him an easy command of the most charming woman at his court. But he made use of this influence only to betray them. He felt, in all its force, the tender passion ; but he felt it modified by the inherent selfishness of his disposition.

He was not, like Napoleon, impelled merely by the animal passions—he shared the whole tender and refined feelings which he inspired ; but he was as fickle as he was ardent, and never scrupled to sacrifice the object of his affections to gratify a new taste, or obtain the mastery of a fresh object of pursuit. If the early desertion of his Queen was less culpable in his case than it would have been in private life—in consequence of the marriages of kings being almost always imposed on them by state necessity, without the slightest regard to similarity of tastes or feelings—the same cannot be said of his successive amours, the results of choice, and prompted by romantic passion, but in which the most heartless selfishness was invariably displayed by this accomplished voluptuary. He successively courted, adored, deserted, and broke the heart of the most charming women in France. This circumstance affords the key to his whole character. It is in love that the real disposition appears. The master-passion does not alter, it only *brings out* the human heart. It presents with greater force, and exhibits in clearer light, the ruling dispositions ; but it alters none of them. Hence the extraordinary difference in the effects it produces ; and hence it is that one set of writers exhibit it as the most elevating and ennobling,

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16.

The passion
of love
in both
brought out
the selfish
feelings.

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another as the most dangerous and self-magnifying passion which can impel the human soul. Both are right : the difference lies, and that is immense, in the souls which are impelled. Love only magnifies their ruling qualities as they existed before it was felt. It renders the noble more noble, the brave more brave, the generous more generous, the self-denying more self-denying ; but it also renders not less certainly the base more base, the cowardly more cowardly, the selfish more selfish, the rapacious more rapacious. It leads one to sacrifice himself for his beloved, it causes another to sacrifice his beloved to himself : it induces in one the death of a hero, in another the life of a seducer.

17.
Opposite
characters
of Louis
XIV. and
William
III.

If ever the characters of two important actors on the theatre of human affairs stood forth in striking and emphatic contrast to each other, they were those of Louis XIV. and William III. They were, in truth, the representatives of the principles for which they respectively so long contended ; their characters embodied the doctrines, and were distinguished by the features, of the causes for which they fought through life. As much as the turn of mind—stately, magnanimous, and ambitious, but bigoted, selfish, and unscrupulous—of Louis XIV. personified the Romish, did the firm and austere, but persevering and unconquerable soul of William, embody the principles of the Protestant faith. The positions they respectively held through life, the stations they occupied, the resources, moral and political, which they wielded, were not less characteristic of the causes of which they were severally the head. Louis led on the feudal energies of the French monarchy. Inured to rigid discipline, directed by consummate talent, supported by immense resources, his armies, uniting the courage of

feudal to the organisation of civilised times, had at first, like those of Cæsar, only to appear to conquer. From his gorgeous palaces at Paris, he seemed able, like the Church of Rome from the halls of the Quirinal, to give law to the whole Christian world. William began the contest under very different circumstances. Sunk in obscure marshes, cooped up in a narrow territory, driven into a corner of Europe, the forces at his command appeared as nothing before the stupendous array of his adversary. He was the emblem of the Protestant faith, arising from small beginnings, springing from the energy of the middle classes, but destined to grow with ceaseless vigour, until it reached the gigantic strength of its awful antagonist.

The result of their contest proved the prodigious difference in the resources of the parties, and affords the clearest illustration of the persevering and indomitable character of William. Down went tower and town before the apparition of Louis in his strength. The iron barriers of Flanders yielded almost without a struggle to his arms. The genius of Turenne and Vauban, the presence of Louis, proved for the time irresistible. The Rhine was crossed; fifty thousand men appeared before the gates of Amsterdam. Dissension had paralysed its strength, terror all but mastered its resolution. England, influenced by French mistresses, bought by French gold, in secret won over to the French faith, held back, and ere long openly joined the oppressor, alike of its liberties and its religion. All seemed lost for the liberties of Europe and the Protestant faith. But William was not dismayed. He had a certain resource against subjugation left. In his own words, "he could die in the last ditch." He communicated his unconquerable spirit to his fainting fel-

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1702.

18.
Heroic re-
sistance of
William to
the French
invasion.

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low-citizens ; he inspired them with the noble resolution to abandon their country rather than submit to the invaders, and “seek in a new hemisphere that liberty of which Europe had become unworthy.” The generous effort was not made in vain. The Dutch rallied round a leader who was not wanting to himself in such a crisis. The dikes were cut ; the labour of centuries was lost ; the ocean resumed its sway over the fields reft from its domain. But the cause of freedom, of religion, was gained. The French armies recoiled from the watery waste, as those of Napoleon afterwards did from the flames of Moscow. Amsterdam was the limit of the conquests of Louis XIV. He there found the power which said, “Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” The manifest danger to Europe caused the triple league to be formed ; even Charles II. became alarmed at the fearful progress of his great rival. The German armies threatened the communications of the French in Holland with their own country. Louis XIV. was obliged to give orders to retreat ; his conquests in the Low Countries were lost as fast as they had been won. But the snake was scotched, not killed ; its strength and daring were unabated. Long, and often doubtful, was the contest ; it was bequeathed to a succeeding generation and another reign. But from the time of the invasion of Holland, the French arms and Romish domination permanently receded ; and but for the desertion of the alliance by England, at the peace of Utrecht, the Allies might have given law in the palace of the Grand Monarque, bridled the tyranny of Bossuet and Tellier, and permanently established the Protestant faith in nearly the half of Europe.

Like many other men who are called on to play an important part in the affairs of the world, William seemed formed by nature for the duties he was destined to perform. Had his mind been stamped by a different die, his character cast in a different mould, he would have failed in his mission. He was not a monarch of the most brilliant, nor a general of the most daring kind. Had he been either the one or the other, he would have been shattered against the colossal strength of Louis XIV., and crushed in the very outset of his career. But he possessed in the highest perfection that great quality without which, in the hour of trial, all others prove of no avail—moral courage, and invincible determination. His enterprises, often designed with ability and executed with daring, were yet all based, like those of Wellington afterwards in Portugal, on a just sense of the necessity of husbanding his resources, arising from the constant inferiority of his forces and means to those of the enemy. He was perseverance itself. Nothing could shake his resolution, nothing divert his purpose. With equal energy he laboured in the cabinet to construct and keep together the vast alliance necessary to restrain the ambition of the French monarch, and toiled in the field to baffle the enterprises of his able generals.

With a force generally inferior in number, always less powerful than that of his adversaries in its discipline, composition, and resources, he nevertheless contrived to sustain the contest, and gradually wrested from his powerful enemy the more important fortresses, which, in the first tumult of invasion, had submitted to his arms. He was frequently worsted, but scarcely ever entirely defeated in pitched battles, for his troops were

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II.

1792.

19.
Adaptation
of the char-
acter of
William to
his destiny
in life.

20.
His policy
in war,
which at
length
proved vic-
torious.

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for the most part inferior in composition to those of the French, while his tenacity and skill never failed to interpose so as to avert a total disaster. But he generally contrived to inflict on them a loss nearly equal to his own; and the barren honours of a well-contested field were all that remained to the victors. Like Washington, he made great use of the mattock and the spade, and often, though for the day victorious, the gallant chivalry of France were decimated before his well-constructed intrenchments. At length he worked his way up to a superiority, when the capture of Namur, in 1695, in the face of the French army, and with the garrison commanded by Marshal Boufflers, proved that the armies of the Grand Monarque had by great exertions been overmatched. If the treaty of Nimeguen was less detrimental to the French power than that of Utrecht afterwards proved, it was more glorious to the arms of the Dutch commonwealth and the guidance of William; for it was the result of efforts in which the weight of the conflict generally fell on Holland alone; and its honours were not to be shared with those won by the wisdom of a Marlborough, or the daring of a Eugene. So passionately fond was William of war, that he fought the great battle with Marshal Luxembourg at St Denis, near Mons, four days after he knew of the signature of the peace of Nimeguen. When reproached for such a needless effusion of blood, he replied, "I could not refuse myself that last lesson in my profession." And at length, mainly by his exertions, the treaty of Ryswick put a bridle in the mouth of Louis, and France openly receded before her once despised foe.¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlbo-
rough, i.
111.

In private life, William was distinguished by the same qualities which marked his public career. He had not

the chivalrous ardour which bespoke the nobles of France, nor the stately munificence of their haughty sovereign. His manners and habits were such as arose from, and suited, the austere and laborious people amongst whom his life was passed. Without being insensible to the softer passions, he never permitted them to influence his conduct, or encroach upon his time. He was patient, laborious, and indefatigable. To courtiers accustomed to the polished elegance of Paris, or the profligate gallantry of St James's, his manners appeared cold and unbending. It was easy to see he had not been bred in the saloons of Versailles or the *soirées* of Charles II. But he was steady and unwavering in his resolutions; his desires were set on great objects; and his external demeanour was correct, and often dignified. He was reproached by the English, not without reason, with being unduly partial, after his accession to the British throne, to his Dutch subjects; and he was influenced through life by a love of money which, though at first arising from a bitter sense of its necessity in his long and arduous conflicts, degenerated in his older years into an avaricious turn.

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21.

His character in private.

The national debt of England has been improperly ascribed to his policy. It arose unavoidably from the Revolution, and is the price which every nation pays for a lasting change, how necessary soever, in its ruling dynasty. When the sovereign can no longer depend on the unbought loyalty of his subjects, he has no resource but in their interested attachment. The selfish desires of the holders of stock must come in place of the disinterested attachment of nations. Louis Philippe's government did the same, under the influence of the

22.

His failings.

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same necessity. Yet William was not a perfect character. He was cold in his feelings, occasionally revengeful, and always avaricious. There is nothing lofty or generous recorded of him; he was merely the persevering architect of his own fortune. More than one dark transaction has left a stain on his memory: his accession to the treaties with France for the partition of Spain proved that his ambition could at times render him insensible to all the dictates of public morality; and the massacre of Glencoe, if it did not equal the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the widespread misery with which it was attended, rivalled it in the perfidy in which it was conceived, and the cruelty with which it was executed.

23.

Character of
James II.
of England.

Less distinguished than either of his great royal contemporaries, by genius or success, JAMES II. of England was yet a sovereign of no ordinary character, and the important events of his reign have impressed his name in an indelible manner on the records of history. In his person a dynasty was overturned, a form of government changed, a race of sovereigns sent into exile, and a new impulse communicated to the Reformed religion. He consummated the Waterloo of the royal dynasty of the Stuarts; he established, without intending it, the Protestant faith in the British empire on an imperishable foundation. Such deeds, for good or for evil, necessarily give immortality to their authors; for they lift them from the common herd of men, the effect of whose actions perish with themselves, to the rank of those who have made durable and indelible changes on human affairs. James did this, like Charles X. in after times, from the force of his will, and the absence of corresponding strength of understanding; from the sincerity of his conscientious

opinions, and the want of that intermixture of worldly prudence which was necessary to give his measures lasting success. A less honest man would never have thought of hazarding the name of royalty for that of religion ; a more able one would probably have succeeded in rendering his religion victorious. It is the mixture of zeal with rashness, sincerity with imprudence, warlike courage with civil incapacity, which has generally induced royal martyrdom.

Yet James II. was not destitute of abilities, and he was actuated by that sincerity of intention and earnestness of purpose which is so important an element in every elevated character. He had none of the levity or *insouciance* of his brother Charles. That light-hearted monarch was his superior in penetration, and greatly his superior in prudence, but he had less of the hero, and incomparably less of the martyr, in his composition. Charles was at heart a Catholic, but he would never have sacrificed three crowns for a mass. In the arms of the Countess of Castlemaine, or the Duchess of Portsmouth, he forgot alike the cares and the duties of royalty. James was not without his personal frailties as well as Charles, but they did not form a ruling part of his character. Cast in a ruder mould, moved by more serious feelings, he was actuated in every period of life by lofty and respectable, because generous and disinterested, passions. Patriotism at first was his ruling motive—England had not a more gallant admiral ; and in his combats with De Ruyter and Van Tromp he exhibited a degree of nautical skill rarely witnessed in those who have been bred in palaces. Nelson or Collingwood did not more gallantly steer into the midst of the enemy's fleet, or engage with more dogged resolu-

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II.
1702.

24.
His good
and heroic
qualities.

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25.
His great
battles with
the Dutch.

tion, yard-arm to yard-arm, with a powerful and redoubtable foe.

Nor was he without capacity in the direction of such combats; and the system of naval tactics which he introduced was followed for above a hundred years in the British navy, till, in the confidence of superior prowess in combating an inferior foe, it was superseded by the breaking of the line, introduced by Rodney in 1784. In one of these great battles with the Dutch, James commanded ninety-eight ships of the line, and was opposed by the Dutch with one hundred and thirteen. Eighteen of the latter were taken or burnt,—the greatest victory ever gained by the English prior to Trafalgar. James both fought most gallantly during the action, and led the chase in his own vessel. In another battle with the Dutch, under De Ruyter, he fought with forty ships of the line against seventy; and so desperate was the fight that, though the English in the end were victorious, James was obliged three times to change his ship, and hoist his flag on another, from the former having become disabled in the fight. But this spirit of gallantry, which led to such glorious deeds when he was Lord High Admiral, only precipitated his ruin. He thought he could direct the nation as he had done his ships of the line. When he ascended the throne, this daring and obstinate disposition was entirely directed towards religion. A sincere, even a bigoted Catholic, he deemed his duty to his faith far superior to all worldly considerations.¹ From the moment of his accession, he laboured assiduously to effect, if not the re-establishment of Romish supremacy, at least such an equal partition of power with the Church of England, as was probably, in the

¹ Lingard, ix. 105-107, and 212, 213.

case of so ambitious a body as the Romish ecclesiastics, the same thing.

The interest of James in the navy, and his efforts for augmenting its strength and increasing its efficiency, were not terminated with his accession to the throne. Not less clearly than his ill-fated father, he felt the necessity of naval superiority to maintain the independence and security of the country ; but it was not on *ship-money* that his fortunes were wrecked. He was a thorough man of business, and frugal in his habits ; and the permanent revenue of the Crown was five times what it had been in the time of Charles I., so that he was enabled, without incurring debt, or having recourse to arbitrary or illegal exactions, to replenish the dockyards, and put the navy into the most respectable condition. He was indefatigable in his efforts to attain these objects ; and such was the practical acquaintance with ship-building and nautical details of which he was possessed, that he was enabled to detect all the abuses in the dockyards which had hitherto eluded observation or defied reformation, and direct all the public funds set apart for that service to the real purposes of the State. Mr Macaulay, no partial panegyrist of James, has told us that he effected these reforms because “ he was the only honest man in his dockyards.” Several hours of personal and close attention were devoted every day to this important branch of the public service ; and the effects which attended his exertions were immense. It was mainly owing to his efforts and patriotic perseverance that the navy of England was put on a footing commensurate with the commercial necessities and political importance of the State, and the fleet equipped, which, four years after he had been expelled from the throne, broke the

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26.

His great
efforts to
restore the
navy, and
its effects.

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naval power of France at La Hogue, and determined for above a century the maritime contest between France and England. And thus, although James was a bigoted Catholic, and sincerely desirous of seeing that faith restored in his dominions, he did more, directly or indirectly, without intending it, than any other man to establish the Protestant faith in Europe; for he reared the fleet which gave Protestant England the empire of the seas, and, by paving the way for the accession of William III. to the throne, he placed her at the head of the grand league for the support of the Reformed faith in Europe, and broke the strength of Louis XIV., the great Romish supporter. So evidently does Supreme Power work out its mysterious designs by the acts, often done with very different intentions, of free agents.¹

¹ Lingard, ix. 22, 23.
Macaulay, ii.

27.

The rashness and imprudence which cost him his throne.

In the prosecution of his object of changing the national religion he was rash, vehement, and inconsiderate. Deterred by no consideration of prudence, influenced by no calculation of his means to his end, he permitted, if he did not actually sanction, atrocious cruelty and oppression towards his unhappy Protestant subjects; and drove on his own objects without the slightest regard to the means of effecting them which he possessed, or the chances of success which they presented. He uniformly maintained, to the last hour of his life, that it was perfect liberty of conscience, and not any exclusive supremacy, which he intended to establish for his Roman Catholic subjects; and several acts of his reign unquestionably favour this opinion. If so, it is a curious historical fact, illustrative of the silent changes of time on human affairs, that the Whigs of 1688 took the crown from his head, and placed a new dynasty on the

throne, for attempting to do the very thing which their successors in 1829, after thirty years' of incessant efforts, actually accomplished. As it was, the attempt lost James and his family the throne, threw England permanently into the Protestant alliance, and, by giving her the lead in the great confederacy against France, contributed more than any other cause to place her on that lofty eminence which she has ever since maintained in European affairs. The constancy of James in misfortune was as remarkable as, and more respectable than, his vehemence in prosperity : with mournful resolution he continued to assert to his dying hour the cause of legitimacy against that of revolution ; and died an exile in a foreign land, the martyr of religious fidelity and royal resolution.*

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ANNE, who ascended the throne on the demise of William, was a very different character from either her father or brother-in-law who had preceded her. She had neither the military intrepidity of the one, nor the civil firmness and moral courage of the other. She had few decided vices, but still fewer noble or elevated qualities. She was a weak and undecided character ; and, like all other persons of that disposition, was extremely liable to the influence of favourites, and not a little violent and capricious in her prepossessions. Her reign is one of the most glorious in the English annals ; but she owed this mainly to the fortunate circumstances which gave the Earl and Countess of Marlborough so

28.
Character
of Queen
Anne.

* Mr Macaulay, in his brilliant history, passes over in entire silence all James's gallant actions with the Dutch, and merely says, when James was driven from the throne, he did not exhibit the resolution which he certainly showed in early life in combating the Dutch. He might as well have said that Nelson was a vain, foolish man ashore, but he certainly exhibited some spirit in early life in combating the French.

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great an ascendancy, early in life, over her opinions and affections, and the strong religious impressions which rendered her, through the greater and the most important part of her reign, the firm bulwark of the Protestant cause and European independence. But later in life her vacillation of character and subjection to favourites appeared in still stronger colours, and were attended with more disastrous effects. Private quarrels, bedchamber intrigues, came to exercise a fatal influence on public affairs. A fit of passion against a lady of her household caused her to break off from the Grand Alliance, reft from England the fruit of Marlborough's victories, and preserved from destruction the tottering throne of Louis XIV. ; before her decease she had returned to the influences of her youth, had opened secret negotiations with the exiled family ; and the suddenness of her death probably alone prevented the Stuart line, and with it the Roman Catholic religion, from being re-established in the British dominions. The real sovereign, during the great and glorious period of her reign, was the Duke of Marlborough.

29.
Commence-
ment of the
war in Italy
under
Prince
Eugene.
His early
life.

War having been resolved on, the first step was taken by the Emperor, who laid claim to Milan as a fief of the Empire, and supported his pretensions by moving an army into Italy, under the command of Prince Eugene of Savoy, who afterwards became so celebrated as the brother and worthy rival in arms of Marlborough. PRINCE EUGENE, though belonging to the same age, often acting in the same army, and sometimes commanding alternately with Marlborough, was a general of an essentially different character. A descendant of the house of Savoy, born at Paris in 1663, and originally destined for the Church, he early evinced a repugnance to theological studies, and, instead of his breviary, was

devouring in secret Plutarch's lives of ancient heroes. His figure was slender, and his constitution at first weak ; but these disadvantages, which caused Louis XIV. to refuse him a regiment, from an opinion that he was not equal to its duties, were soon overcome by the ardour of his mind. Immediately upon this refusal, setting out for Vienna, he entered the Imperial service ; but he was still pursued by the enmity of Louvois, who procured from Louis a decree which pronounced sentence of banishment on all Frenchmen in the armies of foreign powers who should fail to return to their country. " I will re-enter France in spite of him," said Eugene ; and he was more than once as good as his word.

His genius for war was not methodical or scientific, like that of Turenne or Marlborough, nor essentially chivalrous, like that of the Black Prince or the Great Condé. It was more akin to the terrible sweep of the Tartar chiefs ; it savoured more of Oriental daring. He was as prodigal of the blood of his soldiers as Napoleon ; but, unlike him, he never failed to expose his own person with equal readiness in the fight. He did not reserve his attack in person for the close of the affray, like the French Emperor, but was generally to be seen in the fire from the very outset. It was with difficulty he could be restrained from heading the first assault of grenadiers, or leading on the first charge of horse. He spared his soldiers as little as he did himself : column after column, often headed by himself, were hurried on to the attack ; and it was by the unsparing use of that formidable quality in war, recklessness of human life, that he achieved his astonishing successes. His earliest distinguished command was in Italy, in 1691, and his abilities soon gave his kinsman, the Duke of Savoy, an ascendant there

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30.

Character
of his war-
fare, and his
first great
victory over
the Turks.

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1702.

over the French. But it was at the great battle of Zenta, on the Teife, where he surprised and totally defeated Cara-Mustapha, at the head of 120,000 Turks, that his wonderful genius for war first shone forth in its full lustre. He there killed or wounded 20,000 of the enemy, drove 10,000 into the river, took their whole artillery and standards, and entirely dispersed their mighty array. Like Nelson at Copenhagen, Eugene had gained this glorious victory by acting in opposition to his orders, which were positively to avoid a general engagement. This circumstance, joined to the envy excited by his unparalleled triumph, raised a storm at court against the illustrious general, and led to his being deprived of his command, and even threatened with a court-martial. The public voice at Vienna, however, loudly condemned such base ingratitude towards so great a benefactor to the Imperial dominions; and the want of his directing eye being speedily felt in the campaign with the Turks, the Emperor was obliged to restore him to the command, which he, however, only agreed to accept on receiving a *carte blanche* for the conduct of the war.

31.
His cam-
paigns in
Italy and
Germany.

The peace of Carlowitz, in 1699, between the Imperialists and the Ottomans, soon after restored him to a pacific life, and the study of history, in which, above any other, he delighted. But on the breaking out of the War of the Succession, in 1701, he was restored to his military duties, and during two campaigns measured his strength, always with success, in the plains of Lombardy, with the scientific abilities of Marshal Catinat, and the learned experience of Marshal Villeroy, the latter of whom he made prisoner during a nocturnal attack on Cremona in 1703. In 1704 he was transferred to the north of the Alps, to unite with Marlborough in making head against

the great army of Marshal Tallard, which was advancing in so threatening a manner through Bavaria ; and he shared with the illustrious Englishman the glorious victory of Blenheim, which at once delivered Germany, and hurled the French armies, with disgrace, behind the Rhine. Then commenced that steady friendship, and sincere and mutual regard, between these illustrious men, which continued unbroken till the time of their death, and is not the least honourable trait in the character of each. But the want of his protecting arm was long felt in Italy. The great abilities of the Duke de Vendôme had well-nigh counterbalanced there all the advantages of the Allies in Germany ; and the issue of the war in the plains of Piedmont continued doubtful till the glorious victory of Eugene, on the 7th September 1706, when he stormed the French intrenchments around Turin, defended by 50,000 men, at the head of 30,000 only, and totally defeated Marshal Marsin and the Duke of Orleans, with such loss that the French armies were speedily driven across the Alps.

The French and Spaniards assembled an army in the Milanese to resist his advance ; and the Duke of Mantua having joined the cause, that important city was garrisoned by the French troops. But Prince Eugene ere long obliged them to fall back from the banks of the Adige to the line of the Oglio, on which they made a stand. But though hostilities had thus commenced in Italy, negotiations were still carried on at the Hague. It was soon found, however, that the pretensions of the French King were of so exorbitant a character that an accommodation was impossible. He had recently taken a step which showed how much his ambition had increased with the vast accession of power he had received. Charles II. had declared in his testament that the Duke of Anjou

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32.

Commence-
ment of the
war.

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should renounce his rights to the crown of France before receiving that of Spain; but Louis would not permit him to make such a renunciation, and he accepted the Spanish crown without any qualification. The resolution to unite the two crowns on the same head was therefore not attempted to be disguised.

33.
Forces on
the side of
France.

When the contest commenced, the forces which the contending parties could command seemed nearly equal to each other, and the result showed that they were very equally matched. On the side of Louis was France, which, with a population of 20,000,000, could maintain 200,000 soldiers in arms, and Spain, with its vast and varied possessions in the Peninsula, Flanders, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, containing at least 30,000,000 of inhabitants, besides the colonies beyond seas, of great importance from the revenue—not less than £5,000,000 sterling—which they furnished to the Spanish government. Bavaria, too, was an important outwork, not merely from the courageous disposition of its inhabitants, and the firm adherence of its government, through jealousy of Austria, to the French interest, but from the entrance which it afforded to hostile armies into the heart of Germany. The central position, however, of France, and the close proximity of its frontiers to the seat of war in Flanders, Italy, and on the Rhine, rendered it easy to foresee, what the event soon demonstrated, that the weight of the contest, save in the Peninsula, would fall on its forces. But they were numerous and efficient, admirably disciplined, and led by generals of talent and experience; and above all, they were inspired with that confidence in themselves, and justifiable pride, which is the invariable consequence of a long train of military success. It was a matter, too, of

the highest importance to France, that by the Spanish alliance it was secured from invasion or insult from the side of the Pyrenees—the weakest side of the monarchy, and the only one which is not defended by a triple line of fortresses. This enabled Louis to present nearly his whole disposable forces on the Rhine, and in Flanders, to resist the Allies—a circumstance which was the main cause of the facility with which he for long repaired his disasters. It was a sense of the same necessity which induced Napoleon to incur the whole perils of the Spanish invasion, and ultimately led to his ruin.¹

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¹ Sismondi, Hist. des Français, xxvi. 286-290. Capetique, Hist. de Louis XIV. iv. 296-320.

On the other hand, the Allies had the troops of Austria, England, Holland, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and the lesser states of Germany, with slight succour from Prussia and Denmark. These powers had a numerical amount of inhabitants little inferior, if put together, to those of the French and Spanish monarchies, but they were incomparably more divided and distracted by separate interests and necessities, and the military resources of none of them, except Austria, had been fully drawn forth. The latter power had its forces, great as they were, divided by the pressure of a Hungarian insurrection, and the dangers of a Turkish invasion, which the activity of French diplomacy kept continually impending over it; and they were at such a distance from the scene of action that they could seldom be relied on to appear in requisite time at the decisive point. The interests of the different powers were as various as their territories were far severed. England was sincerely set on preventing the union of the French and Spanish monarchies, because its independence was seriously threatened by their junction. But the other powers were actuated by very different motives. Austria was

34.
Forces of
the Allies.

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intent on regaining in whole the splendid inheritance of the Spanish monarchy, of which she regarded herself, not without reason, as defrauded by the testament of Charles II. Holland longed for a barrier of fortresses to shelter her from the invasion of France, which had at no distant period brought her to the very verge of destruction; while Prussia and Denmark were so far removed from the danger that it was with difficulty they could be induced to make any considerable efforts in the common cause.

35.
The weak-
ness of
England in
land war-
fare, from
inexperi-
ence.

England, albeit placed in the very front of the conflict, was so ignorant of her strength, and so little accustomed to exert it, that with a population, including Ireland, of little less than 10,000,000 of souls, she had only, at the highest points of the war, 40,000 men under arms, while France, with her 20,000,000, had 200,000. But, in addition to all this, the coalition was weakened by that jealousy of the commanders of so many different nations of each other which is invariably felt on such occasions, and by the timidity and ignorance of the Dutch deputies, who were always at headquarters in Flanders, and exercised a most pernicious influence on the common cause. On many occasions, in the six first campaigns, they positively forbade operations which would have given the Allies great and decisive success. The only circumstance which formed a set-off against these very serious evils was the experience and warlike skill of a large part of the Allied army, who had been inured to war during the long and arduous campaigns of William—a circumstance well known to Marlborough, and on which his chief reliance was placed. Yet in this respect, too, the French were not inferior, for their armies contained all the veteran troops of Louis. Thus the contest promised to be long and bloody rather than unequal; and though the

physical resources on the two sides were not materially different, yet the superiority in point of numerical amount of forces, central situation, and homogeneity of descent, was decisively on the side of France ; and the danger was very great that the coalition would be dissolved by weighty strokes received by its exposed members, before the requisite succour could arrive from its distant and less menaced extremities.

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1702.

Marlborough's first mission to the Continent, after the accession of Anne, was of a diplomatic character ; and it was by his unwearied efforts, suavity of manner, and singular talents for negotiation, that the difficulties which attend the formation of all such extensive confederacies were overcome. In this bloodless contest, however, the genius of this great man shone forth with a lustre as bright, and was attended with consequences as important, as in his most glorious warlike campaigns. It was mainly by his efforts and extraordinary address that the difficulties connected with the formation of the confederacy were overcome, and the array prepared which afterwards wrought such wonders for the deliverance of Europe. He arrived at the Hague on the 28th March, and left it to attend the obsequies of William on the 5th of April ; but during that short period all obstacles were adjusted, and the conditions of the alliance finally arranged. Nothing could resist the force of his arguments, the address of his diplomacy, the grace of his manner. His opening speech to the States-General contained the principles subsequently embodied and carried into practice in his whole career : " Her Majesty will not content herself with being faithful to the engagements of her predecessor ; she is desirous of cementing, by bonds if possible still more close, the union of two peoples whose interests

35.
Marlborough's first mission to the Continent, and first campaign.

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are the same, and who are equally the object of her solicitude. The present conjuncture of affairs renders it a duty to hold with a firm hand the balance of power in Europe, and to adopt in concert with you the most vigorous measures to put a bridle on the unbounded ambition of France. Should you suggest to her new alliances, new plans, new resources, she will hasten to adopt them, and to support them with all her strength. She puts at your disposition her whole forces by land and sea : all her means of defence and security are in your hands. Her Majesty has authorised me to concert with you such measures as you may deem expedient for the common cause. How fortunate shall I deem myself if I can congratulate my Sovereign on the success of my mission to your High Mightinesses, and I succeed in convincing them of my zeal for their interests and their glory !” M. Dyckelt, the President of the United States Assembly, answered in a speech worthy of the occasion, and of the hero to whom it was addressed. All the efforts of M. de Bart, the French envoy at the Hague, were shattered against the address and persuasive abilities of Marlborough, and the obvious identity of interests which united the two powers. “No,” replied the States-General, “it is not force, but our true interests, which dictate our treaties, and which we shall execute with the most religious good faith. Had France been disposed to renew her former relations with us, she would never have recalled the Count d’Avaux without making some overtures of peace.”¹

¹ Coxe, i.
149, 150.
Hist. de
Marlbo-
rough, i.
113-120.

But it was not in foreign negotiations alone that the great civil and political talents of Marlborough proved at this juncture of the most essential service to Europe. Queen Anne, at her accession to the throne, was deeply

imbued with the prejudices, in ordinary circumstances not unreasonable, of the Tories against foreign connections. Her cabinet was composed almost entirely of men of that party, insomuch that Marlborough, when urging his friend Godolphin to accept the important situation of Lord Treasurer—corresponding to our First Lord of the Treasury—on the formation of the cabinet, used as his main argument, that “unless he took that office he could not hold the command of the armies, as he could rely on no one else to provide the requisite supplies.” But although the obvious danger to the independence of the country, from the union of the strength of France and Spain in the person of so able and ambitious a monarch as Louis XIV., rendered it a matter of necessity for the Tory majority in the cabinet to go into measures for the defence of Europe, yet they were inclined to do so in the most economical manner, and on the smallest possible scale—a policy which would have proved altogether fatal to the common cause, and rendered the war productive only of expense, defeat, and disaster. Marlborough, who clearly discerned that England was the soul of the Grand Alliance, and that, unless she came forward in a manner worthy of her strength and renown, all their efforts would prove ineffectual, exerted himself to the utmost, after his return from the Hague, to combat these ruinous views. He represented that to desert the alliance concluded by the late King would be to dishonour the nation; that nothing but the whole power of England, joined to that of the allied states on the Continent, could promise it a successful issue; and that the slightest appearance of vacillation in executing the engagements he had recently come under with the States of Holland would alienate

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37.
His efforts
to induce
the British
cabinet to
take their
right place
in the war.

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¹ Ledyard, i. 149.
Boyer's Queen Anne, 141.
Coxe, i. 149-152.
Hist. de Marlborough, i. 120-126.

the powers with whom we were united, and lead to the dissolution of the Grand Alliance. These arguments, recommended alike by their intrinsic weight, the eloquence and address of Marlborough, and his known influence with the Queen, proved successful. A majority of the cabinet came over to his views: war was proclaimed against France, on the 4th May, at London, the Hague, and Vienna; and the British cabinet took the most energetic steps to prosecute it with vigour, and execute its engagements with exemplary fidelity.¹

38.
Difficulties about the appointment of a commander-in-chief. Marlborough is at length appointed.

No sooner was this difficulty overcome than a fresh one presented itself in the choice of a commander-in-chief for the Allied forces. This important post was coveted by the King of Prussia, the Archduke Charles, the Elector of Hanover, and the Duke of Zell; while Queen Anne made the greatest exertions to obtain it for her husband, Prince George of Denmark. She even went so far as to declare through Marlborough, at the Hague, that unless the prince was appointed she would not declare war. As Marlborough could not combat the declared wishes of his sovereign, and publicly supported the pretensions of Prince George, everything came to depend on the Dutch Government. But they firmly stood out for Marlborough, as the only man capable of directing the armies; and, owing mainly to their determination, the command was ultimately bestowed on him. In making this vigorous stand, the States-General were actuated not less by respect for his abilities, and confidence in his wisdom, than by an apprehension that Prince George would resist the control of the field-deputies whom they always sent to headquarters to control the operations of the commander-in-chief;² and if the first motive was proved by the

² Coxe, i. 150. Cunningham, i. 264. Marlborough to Godolphin, March 31, 1702.

result to have been entirely well founded, the last was the source of boundless vexation, and often caused the fairest opportunities of decisive success to be lost.

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The Earl of MARLBOROUGH, who had now come to be invested with the chief direction, both civil and military, of the forces of the coalition, was a character of so rare and peculiar a kind that he was not only misunderstood by his contemporaries, but has been in a great degree misrepresented by his successors. It was thus drawn at the time by the hand of an acute observer, a political opponent, and certainly no partial panegyrist. "Marlborough," says Lord Bolingbroke, "succeeded the Prince of Orange, both in the command of the army and in the chief direction of the league; he was the soul of the Grand Alliance against the French. Although *un homme nouveau*, a private individual, a subject, he acquired by his talents and his activity a greater influence in public affairs than his high birth, established authority, and the crown of England, had procured for the Prince of Orange. Not only were all the parts of that great machine preserved by him more entire, and in a state of more complete union, but he in a manner animated the whole, and communicated to it a more rapid and better-sustained movement. To the protracted and often disastrous campaigns which had taken place under the Prince of Orange, succeeded warlike scenes full of action; and all those in which he himself had the direction were crowned with the most brilliant success. He showed himself at once the greatest general and the most skilful minister of his time."¹

39.
Boling-
broke's cha-
racter of
Marlbo-
rough.

¹ Boling-
broke's
Works, vi.
123.

On the other hand, a not less experienced and competent observer has ascribed all Marlborough's success to the irresistible charm of his manner, and denied

40.
His charac-
ter by Lord
Chesterfield.

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that he possessed any extraordinary abilities. "Of all the men I ever knew," says Lord Chesterfield, "the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them. Indeed, he got the most by them; and contrary to the custom of profound historians, who always assign deep causes for great events, I ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough's greatness to those graces. He had no brightness—nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly an excellent plain understanding and sound judgment; but these qualities would probably have never raised him higher than they found him, which was page to James II.'s Queen. But then the graces protected and promoted him. His figure was beautiful; but his manner was irresistible either by man or woman. It was by this engaging graceful manner that he was enabled, during all the war, to connect the various and jarring powers of the Grand Alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies, and wrongheadedness. Whatever court he went to, (and he was often obliged to go to restive and refractory ones,) he brought them into his measures. The Pensionary Heinsius, who had governed the United Provinces for forty years, was absolutely governed by him. He was always cool, and nobody ever observed the least variation in his countenance; he could refuse more easily than others could grant; and those who went from him the most dissatisfied as to the substance of their business, were yet charmed by his manner, and, as it were, comforted by it."¹

¹ Lord Chesterfield's Letters, Macdonald's Edition, i. 221, 222.

The characters thus drawn by these two acute and experienced observers may appear inconsistent with each other, but in reality they are not so. Each tells the

truth, but not the whole truth. There is equal correctness in the veteran statesman's account of his vast civil and military capacity, as in the influence ascribed by the elegant courtier to the beauty of his person and the irresistible charm of his manner. The last at first opened to him the path to greatness; but the first had the greatest share in leading him to its summit. In truth, the secret of Marlborough's character, and the cause of the opposite views presented regarding it, are to be found not merely in the greatness, but *the equal balance* of his faculties. He was not less prudent than daring, wise than enterprising, ardent than cautious. This is met with so seldom in real life, that, when it does occur, the presence of superior abilities is scarcely ever suspected; and their existence is revealed to astonished, and often envious contemporaries, only by the great things afterwards achieved. We are so accustomed to see genius blended with eccentricity, and ardour disfigured by extravagance of conduct or petulance of manner, that when it exists tempered by wisdom, restrained by prudence, guided by a just regard for the feelings of others, and eminently successful, its presence is never suspected; and it becomes known only, generally after middle life, by the great deeds, wholly inconceivable to ordinary men, which it achieves. This was the case with Cæsar; this was the case with Marlborough. If any novelist were to paint in his hero the combination of genius with prudence, of passion with calmness, of impulse with self-control, of warmth of feeling with circumspection of conduct, which occurred in these two great men, the character would pass for unnatural. Nevertheless, it is one which occasionally does exist; just as in a highly-disciplined army there is

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41.

Marlborough was really a combination of both.

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sometimes found all the ardour and enterprise, though guided by wisdom, which distinguishes irregular bands; and it is one which, if moderately favoured by fortune, can scarcely fail to lead, in the end, to the greatest civil or military distinction.

12.
His tender
affection
through life
for the
Countess
of Marlbo-
rough.

A striking proof of this combination of ardent and romantic feelings with exemplary prudence and temper in Marlborough, occurred on occasion of his leaving the shores of Britain to embark for the Continent, in the beginning of May 1702. His despair at parting with his Countess, when he embarked for the Continent, on May 15, (old style.) 1702, was such, that it resembles rather the anguish of an impassioned lover at the first separation from his beloved, than the grief of a man of fifty-two separated from a wife to whom he had been three-and-twenty years married.* This warmth of secret and unsuspected feeling was the more remarkable in Marlborough, that his public conduct was characterised by uncommon prudence and circumspection, which enabled him to overcome difficulties and weather storms which would have proved fatal to ordinary men. The same strange and unusual combination of qualities appeared

* "It is impossible to express with what a heavy heart I parted with you when I was by the water's edge. I could have given my life to have come back, though I knew my own weakness so much that I durst not, for I knew I should have exposed myself to the company. I did for a great while, with a perspective glass, look upon the cliffs, in hopes I might have had one sight of you. We are now out of sight of Margate, and I have neither soul nor spirits; but I do at this minute suffer so much that nothing but being with you can recompense it. If you will be sensible of what I now feel, you will endeavour ever to be easy to me, and then I shall be most happy; for it is you only who can give me true content. I pray God to make you and yours happy; and if I could contribute anything to it, with the utmost hazard of my life I should be glad to do it."—*Marlborough to the Countess*, Wednesday, May 15 26, 1702; *COAR*, i. 159. After landing at the Hague on the 29th, he wrote to her: "I do assure you, upon my soul, I had much rather the whole

in his military career. Such was the bold and daring character of his enterprises, that to those who contemplated them beforehand they appeared the height of temerity ; such the prudence and foresight with which the means of carrying them into execution were prepared, and the vigour with which they were executed, that, to those who contemplated them after, they seemed dictated by the most consummate wisdom. He never fought a battle which he did not gain, nor sat down before a town which he did not take. Though his enterprises were always bold, often daring, they were invariably crowned with success : alone of the great commanders recorded in history, he never sustained a reverse ; on many occasions throughout the war he was only prevented, by the timidity of the Dutch deputies, or the feeble co-operation of the Allied powers, from gaining early and decisive success ; and as it was, he broke the power of the Grand Monarque, and if his hands had not in the end been tied up by an intrigue at home, he would have planted the British standards on Montmartre, and anticipated the triumphs of Blucher and Wellington.

The first month after Marlborough's arrival at the

world should go wrong than you should be uneasy, for the quiet of my life depends only upon your kindness ; and I beg you to believe that you are dearer to me than the whole world. My temper may make you and myself sometimes uneasy, but when I am alone, and I find you kind, if you knew the true quiet I have in my mind, you would then be convinced of my being entirely yours, and that it is in no other power in this world to make me happy but yourself."—*Marlborough to the Countess*, Hague, 29th May 1702 ; COXE, i. 160. It is of the nature of heroic and noble characters to be secretly influenced often through the whole of life by the romantic and impassioned sentiments of this description. We see this in Caesar, in Pompey, in Henry IV., in Nelson, in Marquis Wellesley, in Mark Antony ; but how seldom are they united with the strictest attention to domestic duties, and exhale not in passionate addresses to an adored mistress, but, as with Marlborough and Edward I. of England, in tender and affectionate effusions to a beloved wife !

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43.
Plan of operations for the campaign on the part of the Allies.

Hague was employed in efforts to get the coalesced powers to forward their troops to the scene of action, and arranging with the Allied generals and ministers the plan of the campaign. In this he experienced the usual difficulties, arising from their jealousies or separate interests ; but these were all at length overcome, and the general plan of operations on the Rhine and in Flanders was arranged as follows :—A German army, under Louis, Margrave of Baden, was to be collected on the Upper Rhine, to threaten France from the side of Alsace ; a second corps, 25,000 strong, composed of Prussian troops from the Palatinate, and Dutch under the Prince of Sarbrueck, was to undertake the siege of Kaiserworth ; the main army, under the orders of the Earl of Athlone, 35,000 strong, was destined to cover the frontier of Holland from the Rhine to the Meuse, and at the same time cover the siege of Kaiserworth ; a fourth body of 10,000, under Cohorn, the celebrated engineer, was collected near the mouth of the Scheldt, and threatened the district of Bruges.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 164. Hist. de Marl. i. 129, 130.

44.
And of the French.

The preparations on the part of the French were not less vigorous ; and from the more concentrated position of their troops, and unity of action among their commanders, they, in the first instance, were enabled to bring a preponderating force into the field. On the Lower Rhine, a force, under the Marquis Bedmar and the Count de la Motte, were stationed opposite to Cohorn, to protect the western Netherlands from insult ; Marshal Tallard was detached from the Upper Rhine, with 13,000 men, to interrupt the siege of Kaiserworth ; while the main army, under the command nominally of the Duke of Burgundy, really of Marshal Boufflers, a veteran and experienced officer, was stationed in the bishopric of Liege, resting on the strong fortresses with which that

district of Flanders abounded. Not only were the forces under his command superior by a third to those that Athlone had at his disposal, the latter being 45,000, the former only 35,000 strong, but they had the immense advantage of being in possession of the whole strong places of Brabant and Flanders, which were all garrisoned by French or Spanish troops, forming not only the best and most secure possible basis for offensive operations, but an iron defensive barrier, requiring to be cut through in successive campaigns, and at an enormous expenditure of blood and treasure, before by any road the frontiers of France could be reached.¹

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¹ Coxe, i.
164, 165.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
126-129.

Such as it was, however, this barrier required to be cut through ; and Marlborough resolved to commence it with the siege of KAISERWORTH, a small but very strong town on the right bank of the Rhine, two leagues below Dusseldorf. Its situation was very important ; for on the one side its garrison menaced the circle of Westphalia, on the other the States of Holland, the fortresses opposite to it in that quarter having fallen into ruins. The Earl of Athlone, the British second in command, directed the covering army ; and the first action in the campaign took place on the 27th April, (O. S.,) when a body of 1000 Allied horse defeated one of 700 French, who lost 400 of their number. The victory was far from being easily won on the part of the Allies, who were weakened by 300 of their number, and, like the first action between the Romans and Carthaginians in the second Punic War, betokened a successful, but by no means bloodless issue.* Meanwhile the siege of Kaiser-

45.
Siege and
capture of
Kaiser-
worth.

April 27.

* “ Cædes prope par utrinque fuit. Hoc principium, simul omenque belli, ut summæ rerum prosperum eventum, ita haud sane ineventam ancipitisque certaminis victoriam, Romanis portendit.”—Liv. xxi. c. 29.

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worth advanced but slowly. Trenches were opened, after a sharp action, on the 18th April ; but a vigorous sortie of the besieged soon after destroyed the most advanced of the besiegers' works ; and although, from the time the trenches were fully armed, the Allies kept up an incessant fire from forty-eight heavy guns and thirty mortars, it was not till the 9th June that, after a desperate assault, which cost the besiegers 2000 of their bravest troops in killed and wounded, they made themselves masters of the covered-way and a ravelin. This success, though dear-bought, was decisive ; the besiegers immediately constructed batteries on the covered-way, which, firing right across the ditch, soon made practicable breaches in many different parts of the rampart ; and the place, being no longer tenable, capitulated, on honourable terms, on the 15th June, after a siege which had cost 5000 men to the conquerors.¹

June 15.

¹ Berwick's
Memoirs, i.
174, 175.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
133, 134.

46.

Boufflers
attempts
a coup-de-
main against
Nimeguen,
which Ath-
lone checks.

Boufflers, who was at the head of fifty-one battalions and 111 squadrons, fully 37,000 strong, foreseeing the approaching fall of Kaiserworth, which the strong position occupied by Lord Athlone disabled him from preventing, resolved on a *coup-de-main* against NIMEGUEN, the frontier town of the United Provinces on that side, the capture of which would have opened to him an easy entrance into the heart of their territory. Everything promised easy success, for the place was not only without a garrison, but not a single gun was mounted on the ramparts, which were in many places in a state of dilapidation. As it was, the enterprise had all but succeeded, and unquestionably would have done so, but for the early information which Athlone received of the design, and the vigorous measures which he adopted to baffle it. Boufflers set out at six in the evening, on the

9th, and marched all night ; but he did not advance so expeditiously as he might have done ; and Athlone, having obtained intelligence of his design, broke up, on the evening of the 10th, at eight o'clock, and moved, with the utmost expedition, parallel to the march of the French all night. The whole cavalry was arranged in order of battle on the extreme left, under Athlone in person, so as to cover the march of the infantry and artillery ; and at six in the morning they were attacked by the French horse, also assembled together, under the Duke of Burgundy. A most vigorous and bloody action ensued between the cavalry on either side, supported by the artillery, which kept up a most destructive cannonade, which terminated rather to the disadvantage of the Allies, who were considerably inferior in number, and lost 700 men, and a convoy of 300 waggons. But the time gained was decisive : while the charges of horse were going on, and Athlone's men bravely held their ground, the infantry rapidly defiled in their rear ; and before ten o'clock, twenty battalions manned the exterior works of the place—every ravelin and bastion was bristling with bayonets, and Nimeguen was saved. Boufflers, disappointed in his object, endeavoured to console himself by the plunder of the beautiful district of Cleves, now wholly abandoned to his arms, and from which he contrived, in a few days, to extract 500,000 crowns and 20,000 head of cattle.¹

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1702.

June 10.

¹ Mem. Mil.
i. 533, 534.
Coxe, i. 165.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
133-141.
Mem. de
Berwick,
i. 131-134.

Although Nimeguen was saved, this expedition of Boufflers, and the retreat of the Allied army, which had been rendered necessary to baffle it, spread the utmost consternation throughout the United Provinces, the inhabitants of which beheld the enemy, as it were, at their gates, and from their steeples could descry the fire and smoke of the villages committed to the flames by the French

47.
Marlbo-
rough takes
the com-
mand of the
army in
Nimeguen.

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July 2.

troops. The narrow escape which this important frontier town had made revealed to them the secret of their weakness ; for, had it fallen, nothing remained to stop the incursion of the enemy into the heart of the United Provinces. It was in the midst of these desponding feelings that Marlborough set out from the Hague on the 2d July, after having concluded his arrangements with the Allied ministers, and entered upon the less arduous task of combating the enemy. What had already occurred, since hostilities commenced, had considerably augmented the difficulties of his situation. On the one hand, Athlone, justly proud of his debut in the campaign, resting on the achievements of Kaiserworth taken and Nimeguen delivered, openly aspired, if not to the supreme, at least to an equally divided authority, and made no attempt to conceal his jealousy and disappointment at being superseded in the command by one who had, however able, never yet been intrusted with the direction of the Allied armies. The character, too, of that officer, brave and noble, but cautious and circumspect, accorded but ill with that of Marlborough, in whom these qualities were combined with an enterprise and daring which struck the councils of war, to whom his designs were submitted, with terror in the outset, and were only justified in the end by the wisdom and foresight which directed their execution, and caused them never to miscarry. On the other hand, the timidity and influence of the Dutch deputies at headquarters had been augmented to a most pernicious degree by the terrors inspired by the recent narrow escape of Nimeguen ; they were alarmed at every forward movement, and on several occasions, on the admission of the enemy themselves, they thwarted measures of Marlborough which would have been attended with early

and brilliant success. So uniformly, indeed, did they obstruct his best-conceived enterprises, that the able French biographer of that commander has not hesitated to ascribe their conduct to the spirit of faction, and treachery to their country.* There seems no reason, however, to set it down to such black motives. Timidity, ignorance of the military art, personal presumption, and the spirit of party, will sufficiently account for their conduct, without supposing they were actual traitors. The history of later times has thrown a clear light on this subject; and perhaps if we would discover a just parallel to the difficulties thrown in the way of Marlborough by the Dutch field-deputies, we have only to suppose Wellington controlled in the Peninsula by a Whig committee invested with sovereign powers, and having Earl Grey and Mr Whitbread at their head.¹

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1702.

¹ Cox, i.
167. Hist.
de Marlbo-
rough, i.
146, 147.

No sooner had the English general arrived in the Allied camp at Duckenberg, before Nimeguen, than he drew to his standards 8000 Germans, the survivors of 15,000 who had been employed in the siege of Kaisersworth, brought up eight English regiments of infantry and three of cavalry from Breda, and the contingents of Luneburg and Hesse, under the Prince of Zell, 6000 more. His whole force amounted, when these reinforcements had all arrived, to seventy-six battalions and a hundred and twenty squadrons, mustering 60,000 com-

48.
Force at
Marlbo-
rough's dis-
posal, and
his early
difficulties
in the cam-
paign.

* "La juste confiance que Marlborough avait inspirée aux Etats des Provinces Unies n'avait pu éteindre parmi eux tout esprit de faction : il existait dans leur sein un parti de mécontents, qui, contenus sous Guillaume, cherchaient depuis sa mort à fomenter des troubles ; ils étaient ennemis du système de l'Alliance par cela même qu'il était celui des Etats Généraux. Pour des tels hommes un revers dans l'armée fut devenu le plus beau des succès. Faut il s'étonner de la circonspection timide des envoyés du gouvernement, qui plus d'une fois entrouvèrent les hardis desseins de Marlborough."—*Hist. de Marlborough*, i. 147.

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batants, with sixty-eight field guns, eight mortars, and twenty-four pontoons. On the other hand, the Duke of Burgundy's army was less considerable: he had only fifty-four battalions and a hundred and four squadrons, who did not present above 40,000 sabres and bayonets—capable of being reinforced, it is true, by twenty battalions and twelve squadrons, employed as garrisons in the immediate rear of the army in the field. Confident of success from this superiority of force, as well as the warlike and experienced character of the troops of which it was composed, Marlborough was extremely anxious to commence operations without delay, and he had even fixed on the 8th July as the day for beginning his march towards Brabant. Here, however, the Dutch deputies interposed, and positively forbade any movements which might weaken the covering army on their frontier. Next, the Hanoverian generals declared they could not advance without the orders of their ministers at the Hague; and the Prussians soon after followed their example. These different obstacles, which required to be separately overcome, occasioned such delay that it was not till the 14th (25th) July that he was enabled to march; and on the day following he passed the Meuse by three bridges thrown across that river, a little below Grave. He encamped within two leagues of the French position, and was so confident of success that he said to the Dutch deputies who attended him on a reconnoitring party, pointing to the French camp, "I shall soon deliver you from these troublesome neighbours."¹*

¹ Hist. de Marl. i. 143, 144. Coxe, i. 169-175. Hist. Mil. de la Guerre de la Succession, ii. 73-76.

* On 17th July, Marlborough wrote to his Countess.—"We have now very hot weather, which will ripen the fruit at St Albans. When you are there, think how happy I should be walking alone with you. No ambition can make me amends for being from you."—*Marlborough to Countess*, July 17th, 1702; COXE, i. 172.

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49.

Movements
preparatory
to the siege
of Venloo.

Marlbrough directed his march towards Brabant, and in his course assailed Gravinbroek, where Lord Cutts compelled a fortified castle with eighty men to surrender, on the 28th. The same day the heavy artillery came up from Holland, under the escort of two regiments of English infantry and two of cavalry; and on the 2d August he pushed on to Little Brengel. The object of these movements was to compel the enemy to abandon the line of the Meuse, by threatening Brabant and their communications, and thus enable the Allies to besiege any of the fortresses on that river which might be deemed advisable. This object was entirely gained. Boufflers, retiring on this cross march of Marlborough, crossed the Meuse at Venloo, and directed his march in great haste and some disorder towards Lenhovon, in order to cover Brabant. During this march, Marlborough eagerly watched for a favourable opportunity of attacking the enemy, who had now collected their whole army, and had seventy-two battalions and a hundred and nine squadrons together; and a very favourable one presented itself, when they were in camp in a very bad position at Lonovur. But the Dutch deputies forbade the attack, which alone, says the Duke of Berwick, who was with their army, saved the French from destruction.* Thus delivered from so great a danger, the French continued their march, and took post at Rythoven, while Marlborough commenced his preparations for the siege of

* "Marlbrough proposa de marcher à nous en passant la defile d'Ain, moyennant que la bataille était inévitable sur les bruyères; mais les députés n'y voulurent jamais consentir, non plus qu'à nous attaquer dans notre camp de Lonovur: ce que fut heureux pour nous, car nous étions postés de manière que nous aurions été battus sans pouvoir nous remuer, notre gauche étant dans l'air, et notre droite enfoncée dans un cul de sac entre deux ruisseaux."—*Mémoires de Berwick*, i. 187, who was with the army, and a consummate officer.

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VENLOO, the fortress on the Meuse which he had selected for attack. Ten battalions and seven squadrons were detached to invest that town, while the army was concentrated to cover the approach of the siege equipage which was coming up from Bois-le-Duc. It arrived accordingly on the 22d August, and traversed an open heath near Goldorf in sight of the armies, which were both drawn up in battle array—the one to intercept, the other to protect it. A morass, at first thought to be impassable, though it was soon discovered it was not so, separated the two armies; and so well was Marlborough's position chosen that Boufflers did not venture across to attack him. The English general seeing this, and observing a considerable confusion on the French left, gave orders at three P.M. for a general advance, for an attack on his side; but the orders given to the confederates were so tardily obeyed that the opportunity was lost.* The day passed with no other event but a heavy cannonade on both parts, which caused to each party a loss of some hundred men. Meanwhile, however, the convoy entered the camp of the Allies in safety; and Boufflers, being disappointed in his object of interrupting it, retreated next day by Moll to Bunloo. Venloo was immediately invested. But although the advantage was thus decidedly on the part of the Allies, yet great disappointment was felt, and by none so severely as Marlborough, that the opportunity of bringing the enemy to a decisive action had been lost;¹ and the troops, who knew, by those who had heard the orders given, with whom it

¹ Coxe, i.
170-180,
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
147-150,
Hist. Mil.
i. 30-36.

* "I have but too much reason to complain that the 10,000 men upon our right did not march as soon as I sent them orders, which if they had, I believe we should have had an easy victory, for their whole left was in disorder."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, August 27th, 1702; COXE, i. 180.

rested that they had not been executed, were loud in their complaints against the conduct of the deputies and the inferior generals, by whom the designs of the general-in-chief had been thwarted.

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Venloo, a town of Guelderland, four leagues distant from Ruremonde, is situated on the right bank of the Meuse, and of course commands the navigation of that river. It was strongly fortified, but garrisoned only by six weak battalions and three hundred horse. Its principal bulwark consisted in Fort St Michael, situated on the other side of the Meuse, with which the place communicated by a bridge of boats. COHORN the celebrated engineer, and rival of Vauban, directed the operations of the siege, which was conducted by thirty-two battalions and thirty-six squadrons, under the Prince of Nassau-Saarbruck. The place was invested on the 5th September, while Marlborough took up positions to cover the siege—his right at Sutendal, and the left at Lonaken. With such rapidity were the approaches pushed, that on the 18th a practicable breach was declared in Fort St Michael, against which the principal attack had been directed. The assault was intrusted to Lord Cutts, with a storming party composed chiefly of English troops. That gallant officer himself led on his men, accompanied by Lord Lorn, Sir Richard Temple, and Mr Dalrymple, as volunteers. The Earl of Huntingdon, unable from sickness to surmount the breastwork himself, gave money to the soldiers to help him over. Such gallantry proved irresistible : mingling with the troops, these gallant officers stormed the covered-way, and carried the ravelin, and forced their way up the breach. “My Lord Cutts,” says Marlborough, “commanded at one of the breaches, and the English grenadiers had the honour of being the first that

50.
Description,
siege, and
fall of Ven-
loo, Sept.
23.

Sept. 18.

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II.

1702.

entered the fort.”* Of the garrison, 200 were made prisoners: the remainder, 600 in number, were either killed in the conflict, or drowned in endeavouring to cross the Meuse. Strong batteries were now erected on the captured fort, which opened a tremendous fire across the river on the body of the place; and several breaches having been made, the garrison, on condition of being conducted to Antwerp, capitulated on the 23d, at the moment when the Allies were celebrating by a *feu-de-joie* the capture of Landau, on the Upper Rhine. Encouraged by this success, Marlborough next attacked Ruremonde and Stevenswart, which were taken on the 5th and 6th October, after but a feeble resistance; while an attack on Hulst, which Louis XIV. enjoined as a set-off against so many disasters, failed and was abandoned, though directed by Vauban in person.¹

¹ Lord
Cutt's Desp.
Hist. of
Europe for
1702, 353.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
153-155.
Coxe, i.
183, 184.
Hist. Mil.
i. 102-111.

51.
Marlbo-
rough com-
mences the
siege of
Liege,
Oct. 13.

These successes greatly enhanced the fame and augmented the influence of Marlborough, to whose vigour and daring it was well known they had been entirely owing; and who, in achieving them, had been obliged to combat, not only the generals by whom he was surrounded, but the States-General themselves.† Satisfied with the advantage already gained, the Dutch government were anxious to put the troops into winter-quarters; but Marlborough, who meditated a more important conquest, extorted from them a reluctant consent to the siege of

* *Despatches*, 21st September, 1702.

† On 21st October, 1702, Mr Cardonell wrote to Secretary Harley: "All this good fortune, I may venture to say, is owing under God to my Lord Marlborough's conduct. For if his Excellency had not been very firm in his resolutions, not only against the Dutch generals, but even the States themselves, the alarm in Flanders would have carried good part of our troops that way, and entirely frustrated designs upon the Meuse this campaign."—*State Paper Office*.

LIEGE, the possession of which would give the Allies the command of the Meuse as far as the very heart of Flanders. Boufflers, anticipating his design, reconnoitred the vicinity of that fortress, with a view to posting his army in an intrenched camp under its walls, for which the situation of the ground presented several advantages. But Marlborough, having been apprised of the circumstance, broke up that very night, and used such diligence that he anticipated Boufflers in the very ground he intended to have occupied; and when the French approached, they found the enemy drawn up in the very positions they had designed for themselves! They came, wholly unsuspecting their danger, to within cannon-shot; and an opportunity was now afforded to Marlborough of bringing them to a decisive action, when he was prevented from doing so as usual by the negative interposed by the Dutch deputies. Owing to this circumstance Boufflers was permitted to retire unmolested; and nothing now remaining to prevent the siege of the fortress, the investment was formed on the 20th October.¹

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1702.

¹ Coxe, i.
189, 190.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
159-161.
Hist. Mil.
ii. 109-111.

Liege, once called Little Rome, on account of the extraordinary number of its churches, is situated in a valley watered by the Meuse and several lesser streams, and surrounded by numerous eminences of the most charming beauty. It was at that time defended only by a single wall, and the strength of the place consisted chiefly in the citadel and the Fort Chartreuse, placed on the opposite side of the Meuse, both of which were strongly fortified. Twelve battalions, mustering five thousand combatants, formed the garrison; and fifty guns were mounted on the ramparts. The town surrendered as soon as the enemy appeared at its gates, and the garrison retired into the citadel and the Chartreuse.

52.
Siege and
fall of
Liege,
Oct. 23.

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Oct. 23.

The former was immediately besieged under the skilful directions of Cohorn ; and with such vigour were the approaches conducted that the breach in the counter-scarp of the citadel was declared practicable on the 23d. The assault was immediately ordered ; and “by the extraordinary bravery,” says Marlborough, “of the officers and soldiers, the citadel was carried by storm ; and, for the honour of her Majesty’s subjects, the English were the first that got upon the breach.”* So early in this, as in every other war where ignorance and infatuation has not led them into the field, did the native-born valour of the Anglo-Saxon race make itself known ! Seven battalions and a half were made prisoners on this occasion ; and so disheartened was the enemy by the fall of the citadel that the castle of the Chartreuse, with its garrison of fifteen hundred men, capitulated a few days afterwards. This last success gave the Allies the entire command of Liege, and concluded this short but glorious campaign, in the course of which they had made themselves masters, by main force, in the presence of the French army, of four fortified towns, conquered all Spanish Guelderland, opened the Meuse as far as Liege, carried the strong castles of the latter city by storm, advanced their standards from the Rhine far into Flanders, and became enabled to take up their winter-quarters in the enemy’s territory, amidst fertile fields.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 139, 140.
Hist. de Marl. i. 163-165.
Hist. Mil. ii. 110-112.

53.
Narrow escape of Marlborough from being made prisoner.

The campaign being now concluded, and both parties having gone into winter-quarters, Marlborough embarked on the Meuse to return to London, where his presence was much required to steady the authority and direct the cabinet of the Queen, who had so recently taken her seat on the throne. When dropping down the

* *Despatches*, 23d October, 1702.

Meuse, in company of the Dutch commissioners, he was made prisoner by a French partisan who had made an incursion into those parts ; and owed his escape to the presence of mind of a servant named Gill, who unperceived put into his master's hands an old passport in the name of General Churchill. The Frenchman, intent only on plunder, seized all the plate and valuables in the boat, and made prisoners the small detachment of soldiers who accompanied them ; but, ignorant of the inestimable prize within his grasp, allowed the remainder of the party, including Marlborough, to proceed on their way. On this occasion, it may truly be said, the boat carried Cæsar and his fortunes. He arrived in safety at the Hague, where the States and people received him with the most enthusiastic acclamations. The Pensionary Heinsius expressed only the general feeling when he addressed him in these words : —“ Your captivity was on the point of causing the slavery of these provinces, and restoring to France the power of extending her uncontrollable dominion over all Europe. No hope remained if she retained in bondage the man whom we revere as the instrument of Providence to restore independence to the greater part of the Christian world.” From thence, having concerted the plan for the ensuing campaign with the Dutch government, he crossed over to London, where his reception by the Queen and nation was of the most gratifying description. Her Majesty conferred on him the title of Duke of Marlborough and Marquis of Blandford, and sent a message to the House of Commons suggesting a pension to him of £5000 a-year, secured on the revenue of the post-office ; but that House refused to consent to the alienation of so considerable a part of the public

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revenue. He was amply compensated, however, for this disappointment, by the enthusiastic reception he met with from all classes of the nation, who, long unaccustomed to military success, at least in any cause in which they could sympathise, hailed with transports of joy this first revival of triumph in support of the Protestant faith, and over that power with which, for centuries, they had maintained so constant a rivalry. But of all the praises bestowed on him, none was so gratifying, because so honourable or sincere, as the testimony borne by his second in command and rival, the Earl of Athlone, who said—"The success of the campaign is entirely owing to its incomparable commander-in-chief; for I, the second in command, was on every occasion of an opposite opinion to that which he adopted." It is hard to say whether these words attest most the capacity of the one general, or the magnanimity of the other.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 191, 194, 196. Hist. de Marl., i. 167-169.

51.
Results of
the cam-
paign,
which was
eminently
favourable
to the Allies.

The advantages gained by the Allies during this campaign had already been very great; and although their lustre has been dimmed by the brightness of succeeding exploits, yet they were scarcely less important. They laid the foundation for all that followed. They deprived the French of great part of the principal advantage which they enjoyed at the commencement of the war. It was the acquisition of the Spanish Netherlands, with their vast resources and numerous fortified cities, which rendered Louis so powerful. His standards were brought down to the Rhine and the Waal; they floated within sight of Bergen-op-Zoom and Ehrenbreitstein. Securely based upon the great chain of fortresses in Flanders, which could not be penetrated through but in many successive campaigns, and at an enormous expense of blood and treasure, the French and Spanish armies, already

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masters of the finest provinces and strongest places in Europe, threatened alike the United Provinces, which had no longer any barrier against their incursions, and Germany, which lay exposed, absolutely defenceless, to their attacks. But by the reduction of the fortresses on the Meuse, Marlborough had broken through this line, formidable for offensive and defensive war. He had thrust his iron gauntlet into the centre of their resources. By the reduction of Kaiserworth, Ruremonde, Venloo, and Liege, he had become master of the line of the Meuse as far as the heart of Flanders; Maestricht, the only stronghold on the line previously held by the Dutch, was no longer insulated. In this way, not only was the immense advantage of a secure water-carriage from the harbours of the United Provinces to the seat of war in the Netherlands secured to the Allies, but they held a position far advanced, but yet secure, from which they could at pleasure direct their operations to any quarter which might be deemed advisable. They menaced alike Brussels and Mons on the one side, and Bonn and Cologne on the other.

Great as these advantages were, however, they yet yielded in ultimate importance to the moral influence upon the minds of men with which they were attended. Hitherto the career of Louis had been so successful that it had become the general opinion that he was irresistible. Half of the existing generation had seen his armies overrun Flanders like a torrent, and appear before the gates of Amsterdam in a single campaign. For a long period every war had ended in great acquisition of territory by France; and at the conclusion of the last contest it had been only by unheard-of efforts, and the invincible perseverance of William, that a similar result had been

55.
 Still greater
 moral influ-
 ence of these
 successes.

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II.
1702.

prevented at the Pacification of Ryswick. Now, however, all was changed ; the Allies had not only been victorious, but they had acquired the lead. Their armies outnumbered the French, aided as the latter were by the whole forces of Spain. Their general had assumed the offensive, and taken the initiative. He no longer kept the Allies behind intrenchments, the passive spectators of the reduction of fortresses or the loss of provinces : he led them into the field, offered battle to his enemies, and, when they declined to accept it, proceeded to retaliate their evils upon themselves. Immense was the effect which this change produced upon the minds of men. It was the greater from the protracted period of gloom and depression which had preceded it. It was the first bursting forth of a Canadian spring, after the long night of an arctic winter. The idea became general that Marlborough was the *Man of Destiny*, raised up by Providence to rescue the Protestant Religion and the liberties of Europe from the thralldom of France ; and that confidence in his fortunes spread generally, which, as it is the result of early success, so it is the harbinger of still greater triumphs.

CHAPTER III.

CAMPAIGN OF 1703 AND 1704. BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

FLANDERS, the destined theatre of the greatest of Marlborough's achievements, is a country which, both from its geographical position and physical qualities, has in every age of modern times been the theatre on which the greatest powers of Europe have contended for the supremacy. Its position at the mouth of the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, and commanding the navigation of these great rivers, and the entrance into the immense and opulent regions through which they flow, at once rendered its acquisition a great step in political power, and the certain means of acquiring commercial wealth. Nearly all the commerce of the north of France and Germany, as well as of the Low Countries themselves, entered by one or other of these great arteries, and enriched by the profit with which it was attended the great mercantile cities placed at their mouths, by whose enterprising traders it was all directed. Nor were the agricultural riches of the Low Countries less calculated at once to allure cupidity and reward conquest. A territory generally level and fertile, formed by the alluvial deposit of those great rivers or their tributary streams, was everywhere cultivated to the highest perfection by the laborious arm of industry; and even where it was

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1703.
1.
Description
of the Low
Countries.

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by nature sandy and sterile, as it generally was near the sea-coast, an incomparable system of horticultural cultivation, which brought two crops yearly to maturity on the same soil, had converted sandy heaths into smiling gardens. Farther to the north, in the marshes of Holland, human perseverance had achieved a still more wonderful triumph over the dangers and difficulties of nature. These broad expanses were originally sterile and impassable swamps, but the pasturage of centuries had covered them with a thick coating of mingled animal and vegetable remains ; and in no part of the world are more luxuriant crops of grass now obtained, or more skill evinced in the management of the dairy. The stormy waves of the German Ocean, rising far above their level, are only kept out from these low and grassy meads by dykes, constructed in former times at an incredible expense, and maintained in these only by incessant vigilance and attention. Thus the barrier raised by human hands—

“Spreads its long arm amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire and usurps the shore ;
While the pent ocean, rising o’er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile :
The slow canal, the yellow blossomed vale,
The willow tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain ;
A new creation rescued from his reign.”

2.
Political
causes
which have
divided the
Flemish
provinces.

Nature evidently intended this magnificent country to be the heart of a great empire, which, spreading on both sides of the Rhine, and rivalling England at once in the magnitude of its commerce and the fertility of its fields, might at the same time, from its central position between them, and its command of the mouths of the great rivers which formed the arteries of the adjoining provinces,

have been enabled to hold the balance between France and Prussia. But the religious and political passions of men have defeated her beneficent intentions, and converted the garden of northern Europe into the battle-field, where kings have contended for superiority, and priests have laboured to establish the more degrading chains of religious oppression. The seventeen provinces formed already, in the sixteenth century, a noble sovereignty under the house of Burgundy. Its splendid provinces had grown and flourished in peace; but from the time that Charles the Bold was killed in the battle of Morat, and his daughter Mary preferred the fair-haired and gallant Maximilian of Austria to the dark and crafty Louis of France, warfare has almost incessantly devastated its plains. To the hostility of France and Spain, always ready to break out, because founded on the deep-rooted and lasting feelings of national rivalry, were now superinduced the jealousy of sovereigns at the great addition which this fortunate alliance gave to the united houses of Spain and Austria. Religious animosity ere long added its deadly poison to these already prolific sources of discord: the infamous tyranny of the Spanish government, the frightful atrocities of the Duke of Alva, severed the seventeen provinces into two parts, of which the northern adhered to the Protestant religion and the Lutheran League, and the southern was forcibly retained in the Spanish power and the Romish interest. Thus the banks of the Rhine and the Meuse became the battle-field on which not only the rival powers of Northern and Southern Europe contended for the supremacy, but in which the court of Rome sought again to throw its chains over the minds of men, and Protestant indepen-

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1703.

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3.
Effect of
these causes
in studding
the Low
Countries
with forti-
fied cities.

dence stoutly fought for liberty of thought in religious concerns.

The combined effect of these physical, political, and religious causes, had been to overspread the whole Low Countries not only with opulent and commercial, but with strongly fortified cities. The natural riches with which they were environed, and the immense commercial advantages which their situation at the mouth of the great rivers gave them, had filled them with cities ; and the incessant hostilities of which, for above a century and a half, they had been the theatre, had caused all these cities to be surrounded with formidable ramparts, many of which were environed by a halo of historic glory. The burghers coveted this shelter not less for protection to themselves, than the sovereigns did for security to their dominions. The nature of the country, rich, fertile, and generally level, rendered this indispensable. No chains of mountains or impassable rivers formed the natural frontiers of the rival monarchies, which were there brought into collision ; and unless the towns were fortified, nothing remained to arrest the inroads which their wealth rendered profitable, and their importance made an object of ambition. These causes, acting during a century and a half of either actual or apprehended hostilities, had caused the whole cities of the Low Countries to be surrounded with fortifications, on which the skilful engineers of the rival powers had exhausted all the resources of art, and an almost incredible amount of labour and treasure. Fine causeways, generally running in a straight line, and perfectly level, formed an easy communication between the one and the other : deep and spacious canals often gave them the additional advantages of water-carriage ; but at their gates the

works of Vauban or Cohorn rose, in grim and fearful array, to repel the assaults of the enemy ; and brick ravelins or green mounds were bristling with numerous guns, ready to pour out death upon the audacious intruder, and so strong as to be altogether beyond the reach of an attack so vigorous soever, if not preceded by regular approaches.

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1703.

The presence of these fortified towns over the whole of Flanders, generally not more than four or five leagues distant from each other, has had an important and decisive effect on the system of war which it has been found necessary to carry on there. It is the more important to attend to this in the outset of Marlborough's career, because the experience of the last war is apt to induce an erroneous opinion on the subject. It is well known that the Allies, both in 1814 and 1815, passed with huge armies through Flanders without besieging any of its fortresses, and on both occasions succeeded, by their daring, in dictating a glorious peace under the walls of Paris. But the reason was, that nearly the whole of the famous barrier fortresses had been destroyed by the absurd policy of the Emperor Joseph in 1790 ; and such as remained were easily blockaded by the immense forces which the Allies had at their disposal. The case of a million of armed men, under consummate commanders, assailing a single state, is the exception, not the rule. But with Marlborough, and all the generals of his time, the case was widely different. They were at the head of armies which seldom, if at all, exceeded those immediately opposed to them ; and the fortresses with which the theatre of war was studded were so numerous that it was equally impossible to get at the enemy but through them, or to pass without regarding them. An army

4.
And their
effect on the
system of
war.

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III.

1703.

which should have attempted to do so would speedily have found its rear assailed, and communications cut off, by a host in its rear of equal or greater strength than itself, formed by the union of the garrisons which had been passed. If it attempted to detach in order to observe them, the invading army speedily found itself reduced to a half of its original strength, and incurred the most imminent risk of being obliged to surrender amidst the multitude of enemies with which it was environed. Thus a war of sieges was forced upon Marlborough by the nature of the country in which the contest was carried on, however much he might have been individually disposed to have brought it to a speedier issue by a more audacious policy. Add to which, that both the security of his allies and the strength of the enemy prescribed the same system of warfare; for the Dutch deputies were so apprehensive for the safety of their own territory, that it was certain no consideration would induce them to agree to measures which threatened in appearance even to endanger it; and the Netherlands, bristling with fortified towns, formed so great an addition to the power of France that there could be no security for the liberties of Europe so long as they remained in the hands of Louis.

5.
Effect of
these causes
on the re-
sults of vic-
tories.

These circumstances were attended with two important effects, which go far to explain what at first sight appears often unaccountable in the campaigns of Marlborough in Flanders. The first of these is the inconsiderable results which often followed very great victories; and the facility with which serious disasters were soon repaired by the defeated party. The reason is, that the strength of the conqueror was as much impaired by the necessity of detachments to form sieges or blockade fortresses, when

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the enemy was defeated in the field, as the resources of the latter were augmented by the reserves drawn from the garrisons upon which he fell back. The armies which either party brought into the field, large as they were, constituted but a part, and often an inconsiderable part, of the total force at their disposal. At the conclusion of the campaign of 1702, the whole force which Marlborough commanded consisted of 178 battalions and 220 squadrons, although the force in the field was rarely more than half the amount of either arm.* The remainder was scattered in garrisons over the frontier, or the provinces which were likely to become the theatre of war. It was the same with the French; in the rear of their army in the field was always to be found an equal or greater force, distributed in garrisons. Thus a disaster in battle, however great, was readily surmounted: reinforcements drawn from the fortresses in the rear speedily repaired its losses, and in a few days the defeated army often found itself superior to that by which it had been overcome.

The second effect which resulted from this peculiar character of the theatre of war was the facility of forming, and the great difficulty of expelling an enemy from, the *lines of defence* to which, when inferior in the field, recourse was invariably had. Such a line, generally from fifteen to twenty miles in length, supported by two or three strongly-fortified towns in its course, and strengthened by every castle, wood, or hamlet which was capable of defence, formed an extremely strong position, which it was equally difficult to force by a front attack, or render untenable by a flank movement. To attempt

6.
And in leading to the formation and strength of lines of defence.

* *Histoire Militaire du Guerre de la Succession*, ii. 130.

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III.
1703.

the first with a force barely equal, often inferior, was to incur the risk of almost certain defeat ; to hazard the second, by passing, and exposing the flank of the advancing army to a perpendicular assault from the concentrated masses of the stationary one, was, of all operations that could be imagined, the most perilous. The famous lines of Wellington at Torres Vedras, where the conquests of Napoleon were for the first time permanently arrested, can alone, in recent warfare, give an idea of the formidable nature of such defensive positions. Recourse was almost constantly had to them by the French generals, when they were inferior in the field to the Allies ; and the terrible carnage of Malplaquet, where the victors only won the barren honours of the field by the loss of twenty thousand men, may show the great hazard of assaulting them, even with a numerical superiority of force. It was hopeless to besiege any of the fortresses in the line, when the enemy could at pleasure throw 20,000 or 30,000 men from either side into the beleaguered walls ; and supposing, by a skilful and rapid night-march, they were passed, how were the communications of the invading army to be kept up, with a force equal to itself in its rear, securely posted in a strong position on which all the resources of art had been exhausted, and resting on more than one strong fortress amply supplied with provisions and all the muniments of war ? On lines such as these the French generals repeatedly, during the campaign with Marlborough, bestowed the greatest possible pains : twenty-five thousand peasants laboured at their construction for months together in the rear of the covering army ; and when it fell back and took post under their shelter, a front was presented which often arrested for a whole campaign the utmost efforts of the victorious

Allies, and gained time for the formation of armaments in the interior, which enabled Louis to repair his disasters.

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III.

Never was the value of such defensive lines more clearly demonstrated than in the campaign of 1703, throughout the whole of which they enabled the French army, though unable to keep the field in Flanders against the Allies, to baffle all their best-concerted enterprises.

1703.

7.
Campaign
of 1703 il-
lustrates the
value of
such lines.

Both parties, now fully awakened to the magnitude and importance of the contest, had made the greatest efforts to augment the armies. The English House of Commons, though they had reluctantly entered into the war, had warmed, as they generally do when in harness, as the struggle advanced, and voted liberal supplies for the ensuing year, both for the land and sea services. They voted ten thousand additional troops for the army, on condition that the States-General should prohibit all commerce and correspondence with France and Spain. This stipulation was intended to put a stop to an underhand traffic which the Dutch, who were always intent on mercantile gain, carried on notwithstanding the war with these two hostile states, or permitted their subjects to engage in under the Dutch colours. Louis XIV., on his side now seriously alarmed, for his armies had been worsted both in Flanders, on the Rhine, and in Italy, and were now, for the first time, openly receding on all sides before their enemies, made immense efforts to augment his forces; and his armies, before they took the field in the ensuing campaign, were both stronger and better equipped than at the termination of the preceding one. Notwithstanding the prohibition of the treaty, the Dutch continued, underhand, their gainful traffic with their enemies, realising thus, on a great scale, what one of their number had long before said to Prince Maurice,¹ when remonstrated

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
185, 186.
Coxe, i.
214, 215.

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III.

1703.

with on selling provisions and ammunition to an enemy in a besieged city, "My Lord, if you could by sea carry on a gainful trade with hell, I would not hesitate to expose my sails to its flames."

8.
Chagrins
to which
Marlbo-
rough be-
gan to be
exposed
at home.

Marlborough, on his return to England, was not long of discovering that his difficulties were not confined to foreign affairs on the other side of the water. The thorns began to show themselves at home also. In gratitude to the Queen, who had recently elevated him to the dukedom, and even offered to settle on him £2000 a-year from her privy purse, when the House of Commons refused to sanction the £5000 a-year from the Post-office, the Duke, while he respectfully but firmly declined the offer, exerted himself to the utmost to obtain the consent of Parliament to a grant of £100,000 a-year, which the sovereign was desirous of settling on her husband. As the bill was brought forward by the Tories, and the Whigs were in power, it experienced a very slight opposition in the House of Commons; but in the Lords, contrary to expectation, it encountered the most violent resistance; and it was only carried there, with the utmost difficulty, by a majority of *one*. The resistance came chiefly from the Whigs, who regarded the bill as an infringement of the principles of the Revolution. But what stung Marlborough and the Duchess to the quick was to see their own son-in-law, Lord Sunderland, who had recently taken his seat in the Peers on the death of his father, not only taking a leading part in the opposition, but signing, with twenty-seven other peers, a strong protest against the measure. So irritated was the Duchess at this unexpected step on the part of her son-in-law that it produced an estrangement between them, which was only partially healed by

the good temper and address of Lady Sunderland ; and in the breast of Queen Anne it produced a feeling of irritation, which terminated only with her life. Marlborough's inclination to support the Tories against the Whig party, which still had a majority in the Peers, was further evinced this session by the vigorous support which he gave to a bill increasing the disabilities of Dissenters, introduced into the Commons by St John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke ; but which, after passing that House, was finally lost on a conference of the two Houses, from the refusal of the Commons to adopt the amendments of the Lords.¹

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III.
1703.

¹ Coxe, i.
209, 211,
213. Tin-
dal, xv.
452.

Marlborough soon after experienced a domestic calamity of the severest kind, which afforded an awful proof how little the highest honours and most unbounded worldly success can secure any dispensation from the ordinary lot of humanity. Although the Duchess had borne him four daughters, who all survived, she had only had two sons, the youngest of whom, Charles, died at an early age. The eldest, the Marquis of Blandford, was now in his seventeenth year ; and although he did not evince the brilliant parts of his father, he was equally exempt from the violent passions of his mother ; and he exhibited a sweetness of temper, steadiness of conduct, and docility of disposition, which justly endeared him to his family and friends, and rendered him in an especial manner a favourite with his preceptors. The great renown of his father had very naturally inspired him with the desire to enter the army ; and Marlborough was too much gratified with this mark of spirit to refuse his request of a cornetcy of horse. But the Duchess naturally enough

9.
Character of
the Mar-
quis of
Blandford,
Marlbo-
rough's
only son.

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III.
1703.

shrank from the idea of exposing her only son, and the heir to his father's name and honours, to the hazards of a military life; and in lieu of it he was in the mean time sent to Cambridge. But how often does the course of events defeat the most earnestly desired objects of those who are affected by them !

10.
His illness
and death,
Feb. 20,
1703.

The young Marquis entered Cambridge in November 1702; and the letters to his father and mother, at that time, evince the anxious solicitude which they felt for his health and improvement, and the amelioration in both respects which was taking place in the young nobleman. But on his return to Cambridge, in February 1703, after the Christmas holidays, he was seized with a malignant small-pox prevalent in that town, which, from the first, was attended with the most dangerous symptoms. The Duke and Duchess were in the utmost agony when intelligence arrived of their son's danger; and the letters of the former, in particular, evince a tenderness and parental love extremely striking in one whose mind was so much engrossed with public concerns.* The Queen, too, evinced the utmost solicitude, and her letters on the occasion to the Duchess resemble rather those of an affectionate relative than those even of a benignant sove-

* "I am so troubled at the sad condition this poor child seems to be in, that I know not what to do. I pray God to give you some comfort in this great affliction. If you think anything under heaven can be done, pray let me know it; or if you think my coming can be of the least use, let me know it. I beg that I may hear as often as possible, for I have no thought but what is at Cambridge."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, 19th February 1703, 9 A.M., Thursday night. "I writ to you this morning, and was in hopes I should have heard again before this time, for I hope the doctors were with you early this morning. If we must be so unhappy as to lose this poor child, I pray God to enable us both to behave ourselves with that resignation which we ought to do. If this uneasiness which I now lie under should last long, I think I could not live. For God sake, if there be any hope of recovery, let me know it."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, 19th February 1703, Thursday night.

reign.* Everything that the most tender solicitude could pray for, or the utmost efforts of skill suggest, was tried, but tried in vain. The disease made such rapid progress that the unhappy father, who hurried to Cambridge within a few hours after he had written the last letter, arrived in time only to close the eyes of his beloved son, on the morning of Saturday, 20th February. His remains were interred in the chapel of King's College, with an appropriate inscription, expressive both of his amiable qualities and of the inconsolable grief of his parents. After it was all over, Marlborough evinced the constancy which, even in the most heart-rending bereavements, the firm will show, when the agony of the first moments is past; and, like the general whom Tacitus has immortalised, war was his chief consolation—"Initio ætatis Agricola domestico vulnere ictus, filium amisit—quem casum neque ut plerique fortium virorum ambiziose, neque per lamenta rursus ac mœrorum muliebriter tulit: et in luctu, bellum inter remedia erat."¹ †

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After a week devoted to the first paroxysm of grief, and the arrangements rendered necessary by that misfortune, Marlborough regained the direction and control of his mind. Shortly before the death of his son, his third daughter was married, in her seventeenth year, to the Earl of Bridgewater; on which occasion the

II.
Marriage of
Marlbo-
rough's two
other
daughters.

* "It would have been a great satisfaction to your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley, if you would have given me leave to come to St Alban's, for the unfortunate ought to come to the unfortunate. But since you will not have me, I must content myself as well as I can till I have the happiness of seeing you here. God Almighty bless and comfort my dear Mrs Freeman;² and be assured I will live and die sincerely yours."—*The Queen to the Duchess*, Tuesday night, St James's.

† TACITUS, *Agricola*, § 28.

¹ The sobriquet of the Queen.

² The sobriquet of the Duchess of Marlborough.

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Queen settled on the bride the same munificent portion which she had already bestowed on her elder sisters. The only daughter that remained still unmarried was the Lady Mary, then in her sixteenth year, but whose exquisite beauty, as well as fascinating conversation, had already attracted many noble admirers. Among them was the Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Tullibardine, the son of the Earl of Cromarty, and Lord Mordaunt, son of the celebrated Lord Peterborough. But, in preference to any of these, she bestowed her hand on Viscount Monthermer, son of the Earl of Montagu, and received the same marriage-portion from the Queen which her elder sisters had done. In addition to this, the bridegroom's father was, by Marlborough's interest, created Duke of Montagu, and the son obtained the reversion of the place of Grand Master of the Wardrobe, held by him. Before his departure for the Continent, Marlborough made a new disposition of his property, leaving the bulk of it to his son, if he should be blessed with one; but if not, to Mr Godolphin, son of his eldest daughter, Lady Harriet, with remainder to the second son of Lady Sunderland, with an entreaty to the Queen to make such heir Earl of Marlborough, on condition that he assumed the name and arms of Churchill. Before setting off for the Continent, Marlborough received a letter of condolence from Lord Peterborough, equally remarkable for the beauty of the expression and the tenderness of feeling manifested between two such men.^{1*}

¹ Coxe, i.
225, 232.

* "One cannot judge, my Lord, what time is necessary to moderate so just a grief, or when one may venture to trouble your Grace upon this occasion; but certainly interruption is necessary to melancholy thoughts; and that affliction which cannot be overcome, must be diverted by the necessity of affairs, or some other object. Being alone, and not admitting friends, must necessarily increase and feed that affliction which you are obliged to

Early in this year an important addition to the strength of the confederacy took place by the accession of Portugal to its ranks. In 1701, the king of that country had concluded a treaty with France and Spain, in which he guaranteed the testament of Charles II.; but a change of view ere long took place in the councils of the cabinet of Lisbon, for, on 16th May 1703, a treaty offensive and defensive was concluded by Mr Matheson, the English ambassador, by which the King of Portugal joined the Grand Alliance. It was stipulated that he was to bring twenty-seven thousand men, if required, into the field, of whom twelve thousand were to be in the pay and at the disposal of the Allied powers. This treaty was of the utmost importance to the cause of the confederates, as giving them a solid base for their operations in the Peninsula, and affording an entrance to their armies into the heart of Spain, and the territory which was the immediate cause of the discord. Marlborough, with his usual activity, immediately turned his attention to this quarter, and was indefatigable in his efforts to arrange with the cabinet of Lisbon a suitable plan of operation for the approaching campaign. About the same time an insurrection, occasioned by the atrocious severity of Roman Catholic oppression, broke out in the Cevennes, a mountain-range in the south of France, where the principles of Protestantism had struck the widest roots, and where the memory of the horrid atrocities of the crusade against the Albigenes was yet fresh

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III.

1703.

12.

Accession of
Portugal to
the confederacy, and
insurrections in the
Cevennes.

struggle with, since it is irreparable. I know not whether it be a mitigation that everybody bears a share in your loss, and that the concern is universal. It shows the value of what you no more enjoy; but such is the state of human affairs, that what we possessed with most satisfaction we are always in danger of losing with the greatest regret.”—*Lord Peterborough to Duke of Marlborough*, Feb. 28, 1707. COXE, i. 223.

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in the minds of men. Some scruples were felt by the high Tories in the English cabinet against entering into any concert with insurgents in arms against a lawful sovereign ; but their objections were removed by the consideration that their cause, equally with that of the Allies, was that of religious freedom ; and, by the advice of Marlborough, vessels were despatched to the nearest points on the coast with arms, money, and ammunition for the use of the insurgents.¹

¹ Schoell,
Hist. des
Traités, ii.
34-36.
Coxe, i.
233-236.

13.
Magnificent
plan of the
campaign by
Louis XIV.
on the side
of the
French.

Nothing daunted by these accumulated dangers, a magnificent plan of the campaign had been conceived by the cabinet of Versailles. The great genius of Louis XIV. in strategy there shone forth in full lustre. Instead of confining the war to one of posts and sieges in Flanders and Italy, it was resolved to throw the bulk of his forces at once into Bavaria, and operate against Austria from the heart of Germany, by pouring down the valley of the Danube. The advanced post held there by the Elector of Bavaria in front, forming a salient angle, penetrating as it were into the Imperial dominions, and the menacing aspect of the Hungarian insurrection in rear, promised the most successful issue to this decisive operation. For this purpose Marshal Tallard, with the French army on the Upper Rhine, received orders to cross the Black Forest and advance into Swabia, and unite with the Elector of Bavaria. Marshal Villeroi, with forty battalions and thirty-nine squadrons, was to break off from the army in Flanders, and support the advance by a movement on the Moselle, so as to be in a condition to join the main army on the Danube, of which it would form, as it were, the left wing ; while Vendôme, with the army of Italy, was to penetrate into the Tyrol, and advance by Innspruck on Salzburg. The united

armies, which it was calculated, after deducting all the losses of the campaign, would muster eighty thousand combatants, was then to move direct by Lintz and the valley of the Danube on Vienna, while a large detachment penetrated into Hungary, to support the already formidable insurrection in that kingdom. The plan was grandly conceived; it extended from Verona to Brussels, and brought the forces over that vast extent to converge to the decisive point in the valley of the Danube. The genius of Louis XIV. had outstripped the march of time; a war of sieges was to be turned into one of strategy, and 1703 promised the triumphs which were realised on the same ground, and by following the same plan, by Napoleon, in 1805.¹ *

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
139, 190.
Coxe, i.
233, 239.
Hist. Mil.
iii. 127-130.

But if the plan of the campaign was ably conceived on the part of the French cabinet, it presented, from the multiplicity of its combinations, serious difficulties in execution, and it required, to insure success, a larger force than was at their disposal. Attempted with inadequate forces or unskilful generals, it presented the greatest danger to the invading party, and, like all other daring operations in war, staked the campaign on a single throw, in which decisive success or total ruin awaited the intrepid adventurer. Marlborough, by means of the secret information which he obtained from the French headquarters, had got full intelligence of it; and its danger to the Allies, if it succeeded, struck him as much as the chances of great advantage to them, if it could be baffled. Louis had contemplated offensive operations in the Low Countries as well as in other quarters; and Marshal Villeroy, who had been transferred to the command there from Italy, where he had been

14.
Plans of
Marlbo-
rough to
counter-
act it.

* CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.*, v. 208, 209.

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1703.

opposed to Prince Eugene, even flattered himself he would be able to regain possession of the fortresses on the Meuse, before the Allies were in a condition to take the field. He had under his immediate command sixty-three battalions and one hundred and one squadrons, besides forty battalions and twenty-seven squadrons under the Marquis Bedmar, who was stationed between Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. These forces together were fully fifty-five thousand infantry and twenty thousand horse. Marlborough's battalions were less numerous, but they were stronger than those of the enemy: he had fifty-nine battalions and one hundred and twenty-nine squadrons. With these, however, he meditated offensive operations of the most important kind. His design was to make a grand attack on Antwerp, and, after taking it, to reduce Ostend, which would have opened up a ready communication with England. By these means he hoped not only to gain a great immediate advantage both to the interests of Great Britain and the security of Holland, but also to prevent any considerable draft of troops on the part of the enemy to reinforce their armies in Germany. But he could not prevail on the States to adopt so vigorous a plan, and by them he was compelled, much against his will, to begin his operations with the siege of Bonn, a considerable fortified town on the Lower Rhine.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
239-241.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
189, 190.

15.
Siege and
fall of Bonn.

Having been obliged to adopt this secondary plan of operations, Marlborough set about its execution with his usual vigour and activity. He landed at the Hague on the 17th March; and having completed his arrangements there, he set out for Bonn at the head of forty battalions and sixty squadrons, with one hundred guns, leaving OVERKIRK with the remainder of the army to

form a corps of observation between Liege and Bonn. This gallant general, in whom age had tempered without extinguishing the fire of youth, had recently been appointed second in command on the death of the Earl of Athlone, who formerly enjoyed it. With such diligence did Marlborough proceed that he reached the neighbourhood of Bonn on the 20th April; but the Dutch authorities had been so dilatory in their preparations that it was not till the 3d May that the trenches could be opened. The Marquis Allegre, who commanded the garrison, which was 4500 strong, made a vigorous defence; but such was the activity of Marlborough that the place did not hold out long. Three attacks, each conducted by twelve battalions, were directed against the works: Cohorn had the command of the artillery and engineers and the battering-guns, consisting of one hundred pieces, besides forty mortars. Such was the weight of fire, that practicable breaches were soon made in various parts of the defences. On the 9th, the fort situated on the other side of the Rhine was carried by storm; and the batteries erected on it having enfiladed the works, M. Allegre beat the *chamade* on the 15th, and the garrison, which still consisted of 3600 men, was conducted, in virtue of the capitulation, to Luxembourg.¹

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As the possession of Bonn was of great moment to the Allies, by interrupting the communication up the Rhine, and hindering the transmission of supplies by water from the fortresses of Flanders to the theatre of war in Germany, where the principal effort of the French was to be made, Villeroi made a great effort to raise the siege. As the activity of Marlborough in collecting and moving his forces had forestalled him on the Rhine, the French marshal endeavoured to do this by threaten-

May 15.
¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
192-199.
Hist. Mil.
iii. Coxe,
i. 241, 242.

16.
Villeroi
threatens
Overkirk,
who holds
his ground.

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May 11.

ing Maestricht, after which he proposed to turn short upon Liege, which he hoped would fall into his hands before Marlborough could return from the Rhine to its relief. With this view he broke up, on the night of the 9th May, from Montenacher, where his army, forty thousand strong, lay, and advanced to Tongres, which was invested on the 10th, and which, with two battalions, who defended themselves with extraordinary bravery during twenty-eight hours, was obliged to surrender on the 11th. But the time thus gained, however dearly purchased, proved the salvation of Overkirk. Overjoyed with his success, the French marshal advanced immediately after towards Maestricht, which he expected would fall an easy prey; but what was his surprise when, after a long and fatiguing night-march, he found himself at eight in the morning in front of Overkirk, strongly posted in a defensive position, his right resting on Petersorn, his left on Maestricht. The French leaders were much embarrassed by this unexpected opposition; but at length they resolved to make the attack, and moved forward their whole forces for that purpose. But when they arrived within cannon-shot they were so disconcerted by the firm countenance of Overkirk, and the skill with which he had disposed his guns, so as to command all the avenues by which his position could be approached, that they halted at three in the afternoon, and soon after retraced their steps towards Tongres, leaving the whole glory of defeating their enterprise to Overkirk, who, with no more than twenty-six battalions and sixty squadrons, had baffled two French marshals at the head of a force twofold more numerous.¹

Apprised of the dangers of his lieutenant, Marlborough, after the fall of Bonn, made all imaginable haste

¹ Hist. de Marl. i. 199-202. Hist. Mil. iii. 30-36. Hist. de Eugene et Marl. i. 36, 37.

back to Maestricht, and arrived there on the night of the 18th. The cavalry came up on the 21st, and the infantry some days afterwards. Finding himself now at the head of a gallant army of fifty-nine battalions and a hundred and twenty-nine squadrons, mustering about fifty-five thousand sabres and bayonets, securely based on the fortresses of the Meuse, he resolved to commence his long-meditated designs against Antwerp and Ostend. Though Villeroi's army was nominally superior to that of the confederates, as he had sixty-one battalions and a hundred and eighteen squadrons, yet it was numerically inferior to them from the weakness of his battalions; and therefore he remained strictly on the defensive, and retired whenever there was any appearance of his being brought to action. Meanwhile, Marlborough's designs against Ostend were entirely frustrated by Cohorn, to whom the execution of them in that quarter was to be intrusted, obtaining the consent of the States, instead of besieging that important fortress, to make an incursion into West Flanders for the sake of levying contributions. This was accordingly done: the lines opposite Cohorn were forced, and the irruption made—cupidity, both in the statesmen and the general, prevailing over considerations of military advantage and sound policy.* Dis-

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17.
Marlbo-
rough's
designs
against
Antwerp
and Ostend.

* "I am afraid the diversion M. Cohorn is gone to make in Flanders will not oblige them to make any great detachment, for his design is *not on Ostend, as I desired*, but to force their lines, by which he will *settle a good deal of contribution*, which those people like but too well; for it is certain, if they had taken Ostend, it would have been of great use to the common cause, and they might easily have settled the contributions afterwards; so that, had I been at the Hague, I am very confident they would have preferred the siege of Ostend before the forcing the lines. It is no wonder M. Cohorn is for forcing the lines, for, as he is governor of West Flanders, *he has the tenth of all contributions*. He has begged me to undertake nothing, but simply to keep as near to the French army as possible till his expedition is over."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, May 20 31, 1703; COXE, i. 246.

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¹ Coxe, i.
249, 250.
Hist. Mil.
iii. 45-52.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
206-210.

13.
Marlbo-
rough's
measures
against
Antwerp,
and their
partial
success.

appointed, then, in his designs against Ostend—which were of the utmost moment, as tending to open up a direct and easy communication from the seat of war to England—Marlborough had no alternative but to prosecute his vast object of an attack on Antwerp. This measure he accordingly undertook; and it is the more deserving of attention, as it led to the only serious imputation on the foresight of that consummate commander which all his campaigns afford.¹

Marlborough's plan for the reduction of Antwerp was based upon the co-operation of many different corps advancing from opposite directions—a hazardous operation at all times, but especially when the attack is made on a strong fortress in possession of a powerful enemy, occupying a central position between them. The magnitude of the risk was clearly evinced in the present instance, as it was afterwards in similar operations on a still greater scale, in January 1814, when Wellington directed simultaneous attacks from different quarters on Marshal Soult, in the intrenched camp around Bayonne.* According to Marlborough's plan of operations, General Spaar was to attack that part of the French lines which lay beyond the Scheldt, while Cohorn was to force that part which covered the territory of Hulst; and a considerable force, consisting of twenty-one battalions and sixteen squadrons, under Obdam, was to advance against Antwerp from the side of Bergen-op-Zoom, and, it was hoped, might make itself master of the lines which covered the fortress on that side. Marlborough himself, with the main army, was to threaten the French *corps de bataille*, and enter their lines between Leine and Antwerp, and, in conjunction with Obdam, form the siege of that for-

* ALISON'S *Europe*, chap. 33, § 45, *et seq.*

tress. In pursuance of that design, he broke up on the night of the 26th, and advanced so near the enemy that they remained the whole night under arms. In the same night Cohorn passed the Scheldt, and next morning he and Spaar made a combined attack on the part of the enemy's lines allotted to them, which proved entirely successful, though with the loss of twelve hundred men on the part of the confederates. The news of this success diffused the utmost satisfaction throughout Holland, the more especially as it was known that Obdam had advanced from Bergen-op-Zoom, and taken a position at Ekeren, a short distance to the north of Antwerp. Not a doubt was entertained that the next post would bring the news of the fall, or at least investment, of Antwerp ; but instead of that, it brought intelligence of a disaster which diffused universal consternation.¹

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¹ Rousset,
Hist. de
Eugene et
Marlb. ii.
86, 87.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
208-211.
Coxe, i.
249-252.

The French marshals, seeing themselves threatened on so many sides by forces so considerable, resolved to take advantage of their central position to crush the corps of the Allies which was most advanced ; and they did this with a secrecy and skill deserving of the highest admiration. Villeroi immediately detached Boufflers with thirty companies of grenadiers and thirty squadrons, which set out on the night of the 29th, and, marching all night, reached the headquarters of the Marquis Bedmar at 6 A.M. on the 30th. The combined force, above thirty thousand strong, without losing a minute, defiled through the northern gates of the city, and detaching corps before them, got possession of all the dikes and villages situated behind the Dutch, so as to cut them off from the roads not only to Fort Lille on the Scheldt, but to Bergen-op-Zoom. Marlborough, who anticipated such a movement on the part of his opponents, had the day

19.
Defeat of
M. Obdam
at Ekeren,
June 30.

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1703.

before sent word to M. Obdam of the danger which was approaching, with orders to send his heavy baggage back to Bergen-op-Zoom, to take as strong a position as he could, and, if the enemy advanced in force, to retire at once to that fortress.* Obdam contented himself, however, with obeying the first part of the order, and neglected the second; indeed, he was so far from apprehending any danger, or taking any steps to avert it, that he was for the first time apprised of the approach of the enemy in force by his second in command, who met their advanced guard in person. He immediately made the best dispositions the urgency of the case would admit to repel the enemy, posting his troops behind hedges and across dikes; but Boufflers speedily advanced with twenty battalions to assail his front, while a large body of Spaniards moved against his flank from the great dike of the Scheldt, from whence they had already reached fort St Philippe and the rear of the Dutch position. Seeing himself thus surrounded, Obdam abandoned himself to despair, and, attended only by thirty horsemen, made his escape, with the utmost difficulty, by riding across the country. He himself brought the first intelligence of the disaster to the Hague, where he announced "that he had been entirely routed, that he had escaped to Breda accompanied only by thirty horsemen, and that, as to the rest of the army, he could give no account of it."¹

¹ Hist. de Marlbr. i. 213-215. Hist. de Eugene, &c. i. 39. Coxe, i. 255, 256. Hist. Mil. iii. 63-61.

* "If M. Obdam be not on his guard, he may be beat before we can help him, which will always be the consequence when troops are divided so that the enemy can post themselves between them. *But we have given him such timely notice*, that, if he has not taken a safe camp, he will be very much to blame."— *Marlborough to Godolphin*, June 21, July 2, 1702; COXE, i. 254. That Obdam received these orders is proved by Schlangenberg's (the second in command) official account of the action, wherein he says—"Ayant appris

Abandoned in this manner to their fate, the gallant army of the confederates made a resistance as glorious as the previous supineness and recent evasion of their chief had been discreditable. Schlagenberg, the second in command, immediately assumed the direction, and, being well aware of the desperate state of affairs, made the most heroic efforts to cut his way through the enemy, who, on their part, being fully alive to their advantages, made the greatest exertions to push the Allies from their position into the marshes adjoining the Scheldt, where they would speedily be forced to surrender. The combat, as afterwards at Arcola, took place chiefly on the dikes, where everything depended on the resolution of the heads of the columns; and never did brave men on both sides combat with more heroic valour. In default of ammunition, the bayonet and but-end of the musket were repeatedly employed, and not unfrequently the combatants plunged into the marshes on either side of the dikes, and continued the struggle up to the middle in water. At length the persevering intrepidity of the Allies prevailed over the impetuous valour of the French, and they succeeded, late at night, in forcing their way through, and effecting their retreat to Fort Lille, though with a loss of 4000 men killed and wounded, and 600 prisoners, besides eight guns; while the victors were weakened by 1000 killed and 2000 wounded.¹

Although this heroic termination of the struggle went

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III.

1703.

20,
Gallant re-
treat of M.
Schlagen-
berg.

¹ Rapport
Officiel de
M. Bouff-
lers, July
1, 1703.
Hist. Mil.
iii. 65-78.
Rousset, i.
89, 90.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
220-226.
Coxe, i.
255-256.

plusieurs fois que l'ennemi était plus fort dans ses lignes que nous dans notre armée, et que la grande armée avait marché au-delà du Yecker, et qu'outre cela nous avions des avis que l'ennemi attendait des secours dans ses lignes, nous n'avions pu obtenir d'autre effet de toute notre remontrance que de faire résoudre d'envoyer notre gros bagages à Bergen-op-Zoom."—*Schlagenbourg aux Hautes Puissances; Vie de Eugène et Marlborough*, ii. 89.

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III.

1703.

21.

Pernicious
effect of
this disaster
on the
Allies.

far to allay the violent apprehensions which had been awakened in Holland by the sudden apparition and disastrous intelligence spread by M. Obdam, and deservedly diffused the warmest admiration for the noble manner in which M. Schlangenberg had retrieved affairs when they appeared wholly desperate, yet it was attended with the most prejudicial effects upon the interests of the Alliance, and entirely ruined the prospects of the campaign. Schlangenberg, whose temper and judgment were not equal to his valour, and who had ceased to be employed by William in the latter years of the last war on account of his irritability, broke out into the most violent invectives against the general-in-chief, and openly accused him of having sacrificed the Dutch troops to national jealousy, or the desire of breaking down the reputation of a rival officer. Marlborough, who was conscious that he had fully warned M. Obdam of the danger which was approaching, and pointed out the means of averting it, was much offended at these accusations; and from thenceforward all cordial co-operation between Marlborough and Schlangenberg was at an end. M. Obdam, as well he might, was utterly ruined by this disaster, and never again appeared in command; and although M. Schlangenberg retained his for some time longer, yet his spite constantly appeared: on more than one occasion, as will appear in the sequel, he rendered abortive, by failure to co-operate, the best-laid designs of his commander; and their disunion, in the end, led to the retirement of a gallant and skilful, but jealous and impracticable officer.¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
231-233.
Rouset,
ii. 92.
Coxe, i.
256.

The bad effects of this disunion speedily appeared in that very campaign. Noways disconcerted by the ill success of his former enterprise, Marlborough projected

a fresh attack on the enemy's lines, with a view to uncovering Antwerp, and forming the siege of that fortress. For this purpose, he moved his camp to Thielen on the 5th July, and thence to Breda, to concert measures with the States for the attack. He so far prevailed with the Dutch government that they agreed to the enterprise, and promised to furnish a hundred guns to aid in it. Marlborough was very sanguine of success, observing with justice that if they remained in their lines, with the Scheldt in their rear, the enemy would infallibly be destroyed, if successfully attacked; and that, if they evacuated their lines, they abandoned Antwerp to its fate.* In pursuance of this design, Marlborough, having collected all his forces, consisting of 84 battalions and 145 squadrons, in all 64,000 men, moved forward at three in the morning of the 23d, to attack the enemy, who were posted in battle array, in front of their lines, in the open plain. Both parties deemed a battle inevitable; but Villeroi, who was considerably inferior to the confederates, having only 50,000 combatants, did not await the attack, and when they drew near, withdrew his whole force within his lines. Marlborough, with 4000 horse, approached so near that he drove in the advanced guard to the barrier, and himself saw

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III.

1703.

22.

Marlborough is prevented by the States' deputies from attacking the French lines.

* "My design is, that Spaar should post himself in Flanders, so as to co-operate in the great design, and Cohorn join the army in Lille, and then both armies approach each other, so as we might take first measures for attacking Antwerp at the same time. If you have a mind to have Antwerp, and a speedy end to the war, you must venture something for it. All officers will agree with me that, if they opiniatre the defence of the lines between Antwerp and Liorre, and we should force them, they having a river behind them, it will be next to impossible for them to get off. On the other hand, if they resolve not to defend the lines, then the siege may be made with all the ease imaginable. The good or bad success of the campaign depends entirely on the resolution now taken."—*Marlborough to Heinsius*, July 4 15, 1703, Thielen; COXE, i. 253.

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III.

1703.

these formidable lines, which had a fosse twenty-seven feet wide, nine feet deep of water, and rested on the great fortress of Antwerp. He himself was clear to make the attack, but the Dutch deputies, as usual, interposed and prevented it; and seeing there was nothing more to be done in that quarter, the English general gave orders for his troops to retrace their steps to the Meuse, and form the siege of Huy, a fortress on that river, six leagues above Liege, which gave much annoyance to the Dutch. The investment was completed on the 13th August; and on the 26th the governor hoisted the white flag, and the garrison was conducted to Namur to be exchanged.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 257-262.
Hist. de Marl. i. 237-239.
Hist. Mil. iii. 80-120.
Rousset, ii. 93.

23.
Marlborough again urges the attack of the French lines, and is prevented by the Dutch.

After this success, Marlborough again, and in the most pressing manner, urged the attack of the French lines; and in support of his views he laid before a great council of war, held at Val Nôtre Dame, the very day after Huy surrendered, a most able memorial, in which the advantages of that course are pointed out with a force and clearness which one would think it must have been impossible to resist.* In this proposal he was warmly supported

* "Nous sommes postés sur un terrain uni d'environ deux lieues et demie d'étendue; c'est là que les lignes ennemis sont les plus faibles; c'est là par conséquent qu'il convient de les attaquer. Quand même ils voudroient se défendre, ils sentiroient l'impossibilité de nous résister sur tous les points, voyant notre armée toute entière en état de se développer. Dans le cas où ils se résoudroient à tenter la chance d'une action générale, objet de nos vœux depuis le commencement de la campagne, il faudra en saisir l'occasion avec d'autant plus d'empressement que notre supériorité sur eux est plus grande que jamais. L'ennemi ayant la supériorité en Italie, et dans l'Empire, et n'étant inférieur en force qu'ici, tous les Alliés ont les yeux tournés sur nous: ils seroient fondés à blâmer notre conduite, si nous ne venons pas à leur secours. Le seul moyen est de forcer l'ennemi à retirer de leur territoire une partie de ses troupes, pour les faire passer de ce côté ce que ne peut avoir que par manœuvres hardies de notre part."—*Marlborough, Churchill, Cutts, Lumley, Brunswick, Scholten, Hesse, Tetten.*—*Histoire de Marlborough*, i. 215. See a Memoir to the same purpose in *Despatches*, i. 169.

by all his own generals, and those of Denmark, Lunenburg, and Hesse. They alleged, with reason,* that the Allies, being superior in Flanders, and the French having the upper hand in Germany and Italy, it was of the utmost importance to follow up the present tide of success in the only quarter where it flowed in their favour, and where circumstances afforded the fairest prospect of success, and thus counterbalance disasters elsewhere, by decisive events in the quarter where it was most material to obtain it. The Dutch government, however, set on getting a barrier for themselves, could not be brought to agree to this course, how great soever the advantages which it promised, and insisted, instead, that Marlborough should undertake the siege of Limbourg, which lay open to attack. This was accordingly done; the trenches were commenced in the middle of September, and the garrison, fourteen hundred strong, capitulated on the 27th of the same month—a poor compensation for the total defeat of the French army, which would in all probability have ensued, if the bolder plan of operation he had so earnestly counselled had been adopted.† This terminated the

Sept. 27.

* Memorial, 24th August 1703. — *Despatches*, i. 165.

† Marlborough was much chagrined at being interrupted in his meditated decisive operations by the States-General on this occasion. On the 6th September he wrote to them :—" Vos Hautes Puissances jugeront bien par le camp que nous venons de prendre, qu'on n'a pas voulu se résoudre à tenter les lignes. J'ai été convaincu de plus en plus, depuis l'honneur que j'ai eu de vous écrire, par les avis que j'ai reçus journellement de la situation des ennemis, que cette entreprise n'était pas seulement praticable, mais même qu'on pourrait en espérer tout le succès que je m'étais proposé : enfin l'occasion en est perdue, et je souhaite de tout mon cœur qu'elle n'ait aucune fâcheuse suite, et qu'on n'ait pas lieu de s'en repentir quand il sera trop tard." — *Marlborough aux Etats-Généraux* : 6 Septembre 1703 ; *Despatches*, i. 173. Again he wrote to Godolphin on the same day :—" You will see by my letter that the Dutch generals could not be brought to attack the lines. I pray God they may not have too much reason to repent, and I dare not say what I think of some of those gentlemen who have hindered us from forcing their lines. The

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1703.

campaign of 1703, which, though successful, had led to very different results from what might have been anticipated if Marlborough's advice had been followed, and an earlier victory of Ramilies laid open the whole Flemish plains. Having despatched eight battalions to reinforce the Prince of Hesse, who had sustained serious disaster on the Moselle, he had an interview with the Archduke Charles, whom the Allies had acknowledged as King of Spain, and by whom he was presented with a magnificent sword set with diamonds; he next went to the Hague, and from thence proceeded to London to concert measures for the ensuing campaign, and stimulate the British government to the efforts necessary for its successful prosecution.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
232-234.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
243-246.
Marlb. 23,
Desp. i.
165.

24.
Disasters on
the Upper
Rhine and
in Bavaria.

But while a certain degree of success had thus attended the operations of the Allies in Flanders, where the English contingent acted, and Marlborough had the command, affairs had assumed a very different aspect in Germany and Italy, where the principal efforts of Louis had been made. The French were there superior alike in the number and quality of their troops, and, in Germany at least, in the skill with which they were commanded. Early in June, Marshal Villars assumed the command of the French forces in Alsace, passed the Rhine at Strasburg on the 16th July, took Kehl, and though repulsed by the Prince of Baden at Stollhoffen, penetrated through the defiles of the Black Forest, and reached the Bavarian plains, where he joined the Elector of Bavaria. Meanwhile Marshal Tallard, who was left on the Rhine, took New Brisach on the 7th September, and invested Landau on the 16th of October. The Allies, under the Prince of

unreasonable opposition I have met with has so heated my blood that I am almost mad."--*Marlborough to Godolphin*, September 6, 1703; COXE, i. 234.

Hesse, attempted to raise the siege, but were defeated with considerable loss ; and, soon after, Landau surrendered, thus terminating with disaster the campaign on the Upper Rhine, which had made the French masters of two fortified passages over the Rhine. Still more considerable were the losses sustained in Bavaria. Marshal Villars commanded there, and, at the head of the French and Bavarians, defeated General Stirum, who headed the Imperialists, on the 20th September, on the plains of HOCHSTEDT, destined to be immortalised in the succeeding campaign by a still more glorious victory. On this occasion, the Imperialists lost 5000 men killed and wounded, and 7000 prisoners—a disaster almost equalling that of Hohenlinden, sustained by them at no great distance a century after. In December, Marshal Marsin, who had succeeded Villars in the command, made himself master of the important city of Augsburg, and in January 1704 the Bavarians got possession of Passau. Meanwhile, a formidable insurrection had broken out in Hungary, which so distracted the cabinet of Vienna that the capital seemed to be threatened by the combined forces of the French and Bavarians, after the fall of the latter fortress. The Austrians were evidently about to be assailed on the side where they had scarcely any defence, and the truth of the after words of Napoleon to be verified, that the true avenue to Vienna was through the valley of the Danube.¹

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¹ Hist. Mil.
iii. 425-703.
Rousset, ii.
63, 64.

No event of importance took place in Italy during the campaign, Count Strahremberg, who commanded the Imperial forces, having with great ability forced the Duke de Vendôme, who was at the head of a superior body of French troops, to retire. But in Bavaria and on the Danube, it was evident that the Allies were

25.
Extreme
danger of
the Empire
from these
successes.

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overmatched ; and to the restoration of the balance in that quarter the anxious attention of the confederates was turned during the winter of 1703-4. The dangerous state of the Emperor and the Empire awakened the greatest solicitude at the Hague, as well as unbounded terror at Vienna, from whence the most urgent representations were made on the necessity of reinforcements being sent from Marlborough to their support. But though this was agreed to by England and Holland, so straitened were the Dutch finances that they were wholly unable to form the necessary magazines to enable the Allies to commence operations. Marlborough, during the whole of January and February 1704, was indefatigable in his efforts to overcome these difficulties ; and the preparations having at length been completed, it was agreed by the States, according to a plan of the campaign laid down by Marlborough, that he himself should proceed into Bavaria with the great body of the army under his command, and then, by a vigorous effort in concert with Prince Eugene, detach the Elector of Bavaria from the French alliance, and drive the armies which so seriously threatened Vienna beyond the Rhine. This bold project, which circumstances had now rendered absolutely necessary, was secretly concerted between Marlborough and Eugene, before it was submitted to the governments on either side ; and the great success with which it was attended was mainly owing to these two great men being the unfettered masters of the operation.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
302. Hist.
de Marl.
i. 273.

Marlborough's difficulties were not confined to the other side of the Channel. The usual attendants on greatness—envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness—were actively engaged in the attempt to undermine him at home. It was hard to say whether his difficulties at

the Hague and with the Dutch deputies, or at St James's with the schisms in the cabinet, were the greater. The attempt to form the administration on an extended basis, embracing the leading Tories and a few Whigs, had encountered the fate of all such coalitions ; it had induced jealousies without effecting concord, and excited divisions without producing patriotism. So annoyed was Marlborough with these animosities, and so much was he grieved at the manner in which his best-laid schemes were thwarted, both abroad and at home, by the ignorance, selfishness, and enmities of parties, and the general jealousy of which, from his great influence, he was the object, that he solicited the Queen's permission to resign all his appointments, and retire into the tranquillity of private life.* His crosses, to use his own expression, "made his life a burden to him." The disappointment of the sanguine hopes he had entertained at the commencement of the campaign, from the opposition he had experienced from the Dutch deputies, increased these melancholy feelings ; and it was only a holograph letter of the Queen, couched in terms of unusual and affectionate kindness, that had the effect of preventing a resignation which would have been so fatal to the fortunes of his country.^{1†}

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III.

1703.

26.

Marlborough's difficulties at home : he wishes to resign.

¹ Coxe, i.
266-274.

The only gleam of sunshine which broke through this dark accumulation of clouds on all sides came from the

* "I am so altered in my temper, that when the Queen's service will permit me to quit the station I am now in, I hope she will be so good as to allow me to retire, by which I shall be out of the power of the parties, for I am very sure I can please neither."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, June 16, 1703 ; Coxe, i. 271.

† "It is no wonder that people in your posts should be weary with the world, who are so continually troubled with all the hurry and impertinences of it ; but give me leave to say, you should a little consider your faithful friends and poor country, which must be ruined if ever you put your melan-

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III.

1703.

27.

Alliance
with the
Duke of
Savoy,
Oct. 4.

south of the Alps. Victor Amadeus, the Duke of Savoy, had, in the outset of the war, as already mentioned, embraced the cause of the Bourbons with zeal and sincerity ; and he had been rewarded for his attachment by the marriage of one of his daughters to the Duke of Burgundy, presumptive heir of the French crown, and of the other to the Duke of Anjou, the prince to whom the crown of Spain had been bequeathed. But the events of the war soon opened his eyes to his real interest. The glittering prospect of the double alliance could not blind him to the fact, that, like all weak states which are taken under the protection of powerful ones, his country had lost its independence, and become a mere outwork of France beyond the Alps. Influenced by these feelings, which were daily rendered stronger by the imperious character of the mandates of Louis XIV., and the arbitrary exactions of his officers, Victor Amadeus made secret overtures to the cabinet of Vienna, in the month of May in this year ; and the Duke of Marlborough, to improve these dispositions, despatched Mr Hill, a confidential diplomatic agent, to Turin soon after. Still, however, the Duke hesitated, and he even sent back Mr Hill, when his indecision was terminated by an imprudent act of arrogance on the part of the French monarch. Having received some intelligence of the secret negotiation, Louis commanded Vendôme—who, in pur-

choly thoughts in execution. As for your poor, unfortunate, faithful Morley, [his Queen,] she could not bear it ; for if you should forsake me, I would have nothing more to do with this world, but make a second abdication ; for what is a crown, after the support of it is gone ? I never will forsake your dear self, Mr Freeman, [Marlborough,] nor Mr Montgomery, [Godolphin,] but always be your constant and faithful friend ; and *we four must never part till death now us down with his impartial hand.*—*Queen Anne to Duchess of Marlborough*, July 23, 1703 ; COXE, i. 273.

suance of the concerted plan of operations against Austria, had advanced to the frontiers of the Tyrol—to surround and disarm a body of five thousand Piedmontese, who had been pushed forward to the same quarter to co-operate in the enterprise. This was done, with entire success, on the 3d October: the intelligence reached Turin on the 5th, and next day Victor Amadeus signed a treaty, offensive and defensive, with the Allies, in virtue of which he was to receive the supreme command of the Allied forces in Italy, and to be supported by twenty thousand men furnished by the Emperor, and eighty thousand crowns a-month provided by the maritime powers.¹

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III.
1703.

¹ Hill's
Correspon-
dence, i.
37-41.
Coxe, i.
237-239.

This important accession to their ranks was of great moment to the Allied powers, by breaking up for the present the projected attack upon Austria, and depriving France of the command of those passes in the Alps which enabled them to pour at will their forces into Italy. It was followed immediately by important political steps and change of measures on the part of the Allied powers. Having ascertained that the Bourbon government was very unpopular in many parts of the Peninsula, especially Catalonia, it was determined at once to enforce the claims of the Austrian family, and that the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor, should be proclaimed King of Spain and the Indies. This was done in order to get rid of the objection founded on the danger of uniting two such mighty crowns as those of the Empire and Spain on one head. The young prince was proclaimed with great pomp at Vienna on the 11th October, and on the 19th of that month he quitted that capital, and proceeded to England, to put himself at the head of the armament preparing in its harbours to enforce his claims. He was received with royal honours by the Duke of Marlborough

23.
The throne
of Spain
and the
Indies is
bestowed
on Charles,
second son
of the Em-
peror.

Oct. 11.

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1703.

at Düsseldorf on his road thither, to whom, as well as to the Duchess afterwards in England, he evinced the utmost gratitude and respect. "I have just had the honour," said the Duke, "of putting your Majesty in possession of Limbourg."—"I hope," replied Charles, "to be indebted to your valour for many more places;" and, taking a sword richly set with diamonds from his side, he presented it to the Duke, with these words:—"I am not ashamed to own that I am a poor prince, having no other inheritance than my cloak and my sword. My sword may be serviceable to your Grace; and I hope you will not esteem it the less that I have worn it a-day. I hoped to present it to you at the head of that gallant army, with which you have performed such great actions."—"It acquires," replied the Duke, "additional value in my eyes, because your Majesty has condescended to wear it; and it will always remind me of your just right to the Spanish crown, and of my obligation to hazard my life, and all that is dear to me, to render you the greatest prince in Christendom."¹

¹ Cox, i.
289-291.

29.
Dangers of
the Empire
from the
attacks of
France and
Bavaria.

Marlborough had soon an opportunity of putting his professions to the test, for the state of affairs in Germany was melancholy in the extreme. The accession of Portugal and Savoy to the Alliance had suspended, not averted the peril. The advantages of the last campaign had not only made the French masters of the passage of the Rhine, but it had opened to them an entrance into the heart of Germany. By the acquisition of Landau and New Brisach, they had secured the means of passing the former: by the alliance with Bavaria they became masters of the most important fortresses in the latter. The Elector of Bavaria had the command of the Danube from its source to the Austrian frontier: he had

in his hands Ulm, with a strong garrison, Ratisbon, Augsburg, and he had recently taken Passau and Lintz, the keys of Upper Austria. The French armies only required to force the defiles of the Black Forest, occupied by some thousands of undisciplined peasants, to reach the Elector of Bavaria, who had fixed his headquarters in the neighbourhood of Ulm, where he was at the head of 45,000 men, whom recent victory had rendered doubly formidable. Louis XIV. had not been slow to take advantage of this auspicious state of affairs, and his generals were prepared, in the very outset of the campaign, to act with the utmost vigour. Besides the army in the Netherlands opposed to Marlborough, Marshal Tallard, with 45,000 men, was posted on the Upper Rhine, ready to co-operate with the advanced body, of equal amount, resting on the Bavarian fortresses, and pour with their united force, 90,000 strong, down the valley of the Danube, where the Imperialists had neither fortresses nor any adequate force in the field to oppose them. For so entirely was the strength of Austria prostrated by the expenses of the contest, and the formidable nature of the Hungarian insurrection—which had acquired such strength that its leader, Prince Ragotski, was levying contributions to the very gates of Vienna, and had driven his opponent, Schliek, back to Presburg—that they could not collect 20,000 men to cover the western frontier of the Hereditary States, or save the monarchy from ruin.¹

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III.
1704.

¹ Coxe, i.
298-300.
Hist. de
Marlb i.
267, 269.
273. Hist.
Mil. iii.
708-720.

The measures of Marlborough, who had concerted the whole plan of the campaign with Eugene, were calculated to meet these most appalling dangers. He had influence enough with the British cabinet to obtain an addition of 10,000 men to the English contingent, which raised

30.
Measures
of Marlbo-
rough and
Eugene to
avert the
danger.

CHAP.
III.
1704.

the British native troops in the Low Countries to 30,000 men, and the force under his immediate command to 50,000. He communicated the same impulse to the confederates, having persuaded the Dutch to take 4000 Wirtemberg troops into their pay, and grant a subsidy of 200,000 crowns to the Elector of Baden and the circle of Swabia, to enable their forces to take the field. More difficulty was experienced in getting the States to consent to the proposed measures for the liberation of Germany, as they involved a temporary abandonment of their own frontier; but at length his great influence and engaging manners, joined to the evident peril of the Empire, procured a tardy acquiescence in all his proposals. It was agreed that the English general was to advance vigorously against Villeroy in the Low Countries, and force him either to accept battle or retire to the Moselle or the Rhine. In either case, as success was not doubted, he was to cross over into Germany by the Electorate of Cologne, advance as rapidly as possible into Bavaria, and either form a junction with Prince Eugene, who commanded the Imperial army in that quarter, or, by threatening the communications of the French army in Swabia, compel it to fall back to the Rhine. The great object was to save Vienna, and prevent the advance of the French into Hungary, where a few of their regiments might fan the insurrection, already so formidable, into an inextinguishable flame. This plan, by weakening the Allies in the Low Countries, might expose them, and especially the Dutch, to disadvantage in that quarter; but that was of little consequence. The vital point was in the valley of the Danube: it was there that the decisive blows were to be struck. Marlborough, in resisting the French invasion, proceeded on

exactly the same principles, and showed the same decision of mind, as Napoleon in 1796, when he raised the siege of Mantua to meet the Austrian armies under Wurmser descending from the Tyrol; or Suwarroff in 1799, when he raised that of Turin to march against Macdonald, advancing from southern Italy towards the fatal field of the Trebbia. In all these measures he received the cordial support of his illustrious colleague, Prince Eugene, who was so far from envying his rival, or joining the clamour raised against him for the unsatisfactory issue of the last campaign, that he said, when the subject was mentioned, "I suspect, if Alexander the Great had been obliged to await the approbation of the Dutch deputies before he executed his projects, his conquests would not have been quite so rapid as they were."¹

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III.
1704.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
259. Coxe,
i. 302-306.

Marlbrough was extremely desponding as to the issue of the campaign; but, like a good soldier, he prepared to do his duty with vigour and alacrity. He began his march with the great body of his forces on the 8th May, and, crossing the Meuse at Maestricht, proceeded with the utmost expedition towards the Rhine by Bedbourg and Kirpen, and arrived at Bonn on the 28th of the same month. Meanwhile the French were also powerfully reinforcing their army on the Danube. Villeroi, with the French forces on the Meuse, retired before him towards the Moselle, and eluded all attempts to bring him to battle. Early in the same month, strong reinforcements of French troops joined the Elector of Bavaria, while Villeroi, with the army of Flanders, was hastening in the same direction. Marlborough having obtained intelligence of these great additions to the enemy's forces in the vital quarter, wrote to the States-

31.
Marlbo-
rough's
cross march
into Ger-
many, and
first inter-
view with
Eugene,
June 8.

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June 8.

General, that unless they promptly sent him succour, the Emperor would be entirely ruined.* Meanwhile, however, relying chiefly on himself, he redoubled his activity and diligence. Continuing his march up the Rhine by Coblenz and Cassel, opposite Mayence, he crossed the Necker near Ladenbourg on the 3d June. From thence he pursued his march without intermission by Mundelsheim, where Prince Eugene came across from his own army to meet him, and the two illustrious generals had their first interview. The next day they marched to Heppach, where Marlborough reviewed the English cavalry, which alone, from the rapidity of the march, had yet come up. The Prince expressed his surprise to see the troops in such excellent condition, after their long and fatiguing march. "I have heard much," he observed, "of the English cavalry, and find it, indeed, to be the finest and best-appointed I have ever seen. Money, of which you have no want in England, can buy clothes and accoutrements; but nothing can purchase the spirit which I see in the looks of your men. It is an earnest of victory."—"My troops," replied Marlborough, "are always animated with zeal for the common cause; but they are now inspired by your presence. To you we owe that spirit which awakens your admiration." Nor was he less courteous to the Prince of Baden, who joined them a few days afterwards. "I am come," said the Prince, "to meet the deliverer of the Empire: you will assist me in vindicating my

* "Ce matin j'ai appris par une estafette que les ennemis avaient joint l'Electeur de Bavière avec 26,000 hommes, et que M. de Villeroi a passé la Meuse avec la meilleure partie de l'armée des Pays Bas, et qu'il poussait sa marche en toute diligence vers la Moselle, de sorte que, sans un prompt secours, l'Empire court risque d'être entièrement abimé."—*Marlborough aux Etats-Généraux*; Bonn, 2 Mai 1704—*Despatches*, i. 274.

honour, which has been lowered in the public opinion," alluding to his recent defeats. "I am come," rejoined Marlborough, "to learn of your Highness how to save the Empire. None but the weak in judgment can depreciate the merits of the Prince of Baden, who has not only preserved the Empire, but enlarged its boundaries."¹

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III.
1704.

¹ Hare's
Journal.
Coxe, i.
337, 338.

Notwithstanding this interchange of compliments, it was no easy matter to arrange the separate pretensions of the three generals to the supreme command. No difficulty was experienced between Eugene and Marlborough, who were both too great to feel the slightest jealousy of each other, and from the very first agreed, with the utmost cordiality, not only on the general plan of operations, but as to the mode in which the command was to be alternately exercised by them. They both, however, encountered the greatest difficulty with the Prince of Baden, who insisted on his right as superior in rank, and could not by any effort be made to agree to what they both recommended, that he should take the direction of the army on the Rhine, and leave them the command of that on the Danube. It was even with the utmost difficulty that he could be brought to acquiesce in the proposal that the command, where they were, should be shared alternately between him and the English general. To this arrangement, however, he was at length brought to agree; and Eugene, in consequence, to his own great regret, as well as that of Marlborough, set out for the army on the Rhine, leaving Marlborough and the Prince of Baden in command of that on the Danube.¹

32.
Difficulties
in arranging
the com-
mand.

¹ Coxe, i.
337, 338.

The plan of operation concerted between Marlborough and Eugene was, that the latter, with his own corps reinforced by a Danube division, was to remain in obser-

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III.

1704.

33.

Difficulties
of Marlbo-
rough's
march, and
his junction
with the
Prince of
Baden.

vation on the Rhine, and observe and follow the motions of Marshal Tallard, who commanded the French army, forty thousand strong, in Alsace, while Marlborough, united with the Prince of Baden, was to move against the Elector of Bavaria, and attack him wherever he could be met with. In carrying into execution this project, however, very serious difficulties had to be overcome. Marlborough's line of march lay by Great Heppach, through the long and narrow defile of Gieslingen, which, difficult at all times, was at that moment rendered doubly so by the heavy rains which had recently fallen and swelled the rivulets, which, descending from the hills on either side, crossed the road often in perfect torrents. At this very moment, too, he received the most disquieting accounts from Overkirk in his rear, with an urgent application from the States for the return of a large body of troops to aid in the covering of the Dutch frontier. With the same instinct, however, as to where the decisive point really lay, which Blucher afterwards showed when informed of the dangers of Thielman in his rear, when the thunder of Waterloo resounded in his front, Marlborough held straight on, and contenting himself with providing a large number of boats for the conveyance of troops down the Rhine, when required for the protection of Holland, struggled with great difficulty through the rugged defile. Such perseverance at length met with its reward; the obstacles of the pass were surmounted; the junction with the Prince of Baden's men was effected; and the English foot and artillery under General Churchill having also come up in the finest order. Marlborough found himself at the head of a splendid army, consisting of ninety-six battalions, two hundred and two squadrons, and forty-eight guns,¹ mus-

¹ Cox, i.
523-347.
Hist. of
Marlb. i.
304-306.
Hist. M. L.
iv.

tering sixty thousand combatants. With truth might he say that the measure thus adopted was the only one which could save the Empire from ruin.*

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1704.

The French and Bavarian army, which consisted of eighty-eight battalions and one hundred and sixty squadrons, with ninety guns, forty mortars, and thirty pontoons, occupied a position calculated to cover Donauwörth as the pivot on which they rested. In front of it, and in a situation to secure the passage of the Danube at Donauwörth, was posted on the north of that river General d'Arco, with 12,000 men, including 2500 horse, in a strong position on the height of SCHELLENBERG. This is a hill of a conical form, with a flat summit half a mile in diameter, overhanging the left bank of the Danube. The left rested on the covered way of Donauwörth; the right, following the line of the ground, was thrown back till it reached one of the branches of the Danube. Along the front facing the north, from which the enemy might be expected, ran an old rampart, now mouldering in ruin, long before erected by Gustavus Adolphus during the thirty years' war, when his military genius had discerned the importance and strengthened the natural advantages of this post.¹ The central part of this old intrenchment alone was in a pos-

34.
Description
of the in-
trenched
camp of
Schellen-
berg.

¹ Coxe, i.
348, 349.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
319.

* "I am very confident, without flattering myself, that this march was the only thing that was capable of saving us from ruin; so that, whatever the success may be, I shall have the inward satisfaction of knowing that I have done all that was in my power, and that none can be angry with me for the undertaking, but such as wish ill to their country and religion; and with such I am not desirous of their friendship. You will easily believe that I act with all my heart and soul, since good success will, in all likelihood, give me the happiness of ending my days with you. Order Hodge to send me a draught of a stable for the lodge: as you set your heart on that place, I should wish all conveniences to be about it."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, June 18 29, 1704; COXE, i. 347.

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1704.

ture of defence ; but the remainder was in a state of rapid advancement, and in a day might be rendered impregnable. Opposite the centre stood a thick wood called the Borchberg ; on the right the position was open, but the left was a ravine, in the bottom of which a rivulet flowed.

35.
Marlborough re-
solves to
attack.

Resolved to attack the camp without delay, Marlborough broke up from the ground where he had passed the night, at three in the morning of the 2d July, and arrived in sight of the Schellenberg, after a fatiguing march, at two in the afternoon, when the troops were halted. Marlborough, however, who advanced to reconnoitre in person at the head of a large body of horse, and came so near that he was saluted by a heavy fire from the works, no sooner perceived the preparations of the enemy than he resolved on an immediate attack. He saw not only a great number of workmen busied with the strengthening of the intrenchment in front, but preparations making for the formation of a camp, adequate to the reception of the whole remainder of the Elector's army on the right bank of the Danube, immediately behind the intrenched camp. At the same time he received intelligence that Tallard at Strasbourg was detaching a large body of men to the Elector's support, who might soon be expected. He gave orders in consequence for the troops, wearied as they were, to advance after a few hours' rest to the attack. The Prince of Baden, who was alarmed by the strength of the enemy's works, counselled delay ; but Marlborough, pointing to the tents, which were already beginning to be pitched on the southern bank of the Danube, replied, " Either the enemy will escape, or will have time to finish their works. In the latter case, the loss of every single hour will cost the loss of a thousand men."¹

¹ Falkenstein's Bayem, 303. Ledyard, i. 323. Hist. de Marlbr. i. 315-317. Coxe, i. 343-352. Hist. Mil. iv. 513, 514.

Anticipating an attack, Marlborough had selected a choice body, composed of 130 picked men from each battalion, amounting to 6000 men, besides thirty squadrons of horse, which were followed by three regiments of Imperial grenadiers under Prince Louis. The united force was 10,500 men ; but the remainder of the army, though considerably in the rear, was prepared to advance in support. The French and Bavarian generals did not expect an attack, deeming it impossible that troops, fatigued by a long march on a sultry day, would be led to the assault after only a few hours' rest. When the increasing masses of the enemy, however, and their continued advance, left no doubt that an immediate attack was intended, d'Arco ordered the troops to desist from work and stand to their arms, and sent four battalions into Donauwörth, with orders to place them in the covered way of the fortress, so as to be able to protect the left of the position by a flanking fire ; a command which, unhappily for him, was not attended to, and led to important consequences on the fate of the day. In a few minutes after, the conflict began at six in the evening. As the thickness of the Borchberg precluded the possibility of penetrating through it, Marlborough directed his attack against the two flanks, the principal effort being made on the face stretching from the end of the wood to the covered way of the fortress. The troops marched forward in ordinary time and admirable array towards the works ; but when they arrived within range of grape, they were assailed by such a storm of shot, that involuntarily the line wavered. In a few minutes General Goor and the bravest officers were struck down, and the whole fell back in confusion.¹ The Bavarians seeing this, leapt out of their intrenchments with loud shouts, and

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36.

Commence-
ment of the
attack on
the Schel-
lenberg,
July 2.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
317, 318.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 514, 515.
Coxe, i.
356, 357.

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pursued the broken assailants with the bayonet; but they in their turn were discomfited, when disordered by their tumultuous rush, by a battalion of English guards, which kept its ground, and poured in so destructive a volley on their flank that they were thrown into confusion, and General Maffei, who commanded, drew them back within the works.

37.
Final vic-
tory of
Marlbo-
rough.

Nothing daunted by this sturdy resistance, Marlborough re-formed his men, and again led them to the attack; but though he exposed his person with the utmost gallantry, and had several of his staff struck down around him, they were again repulsed with very heavy loss. A third attack shared the same fate, and the pursuit of the victorious Bavarians, who again issued from their works, was only checked by General Lumley, who hastened forward with his horse, and, by a headlong charge, arrested the progress of the pursuers. The spirit of the assailants was beginning to sink under these repeated repulses and the fearful carnage with which they were attended, when they were cheered by the sight of the Prince of Baden's men, the heads of whose columns now began to appear in sight, and immediately prepared to take a part in the action. They passed the Wernitz below Berg, and advancing against the unfinished part of the works on the enemy's left between the fortress and the wood, easily dispersed two French battalions left in guard of that part of the position, and experienced but little loss from the other two battalions sent there in the beginning of the action, and which, instead of lining the covered way as they had been directed, kept up a distant and ineffectual fire from the summit of the rampart. They got within the lines, in consequence, with very little difficulty; and as d'Arco hastily recalled part of the

defenders from the centre to support the menaced quarter, Marlborough, taking advantage of the momentary confusion, led his men to a fourth attack, in which a dismounted regiment of dragoons took part with the foot-soldiers. The works were soon scaled, and the horse, pouring in at every opening they could find, pursued the fugitives, sword in hand, towards the Danube, with dreadful slaughter, where numbers were drowned in the attempt to cross over, as the bridge of Donauwörth was speedily choked up by the fugitives. D'Arco most gallantly headed the rear-guard, and by his firm countenance enabled numbers to escape. The camp, with baggage and equipage, fell into the hands of the victors, with sixteen guns and thirteen standards. Their loss was very heavy, amounting to no less than 1500 killed and 4000 wounded—almost entirely among the English, who bore the brunt of the conflict : but that of the enemy was still greater ; for although the killed and wounded in the action was not so great as that of the confederates, as is often the case when intrenchments are stormed, vast numbers deserted after, and only 3000 could be collected round the French standards when the fugitives regained their comrades to the south of the Danube.¹

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¹ Hist. Mil.
iv. 515.
Coxe, i.
357, 358.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
318-321.
Ledyard,
i. 332, 335.

This brilliant opening of the German campaign was soon followed by substantial results. It gave the Allies the command of the bridge of Donauwörth over the Danube—a matter of very great moment, in a military point of view ; but its moral results were still more important, for it was a great advantage gained, at the outset of the campaign, to spread the idea that the Duke of Marlborough and his sturdy islanders were invincible. A few days after Rain surrendered ; Aicha opened its gates ; and, following up his career of success, Marlborough

38.
Subsequent
successes in
Bavaria.

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advanced to within a league of Augsburg, under the cannon of which the Elector of Bavaria was placed with the remnant of his forces, in a situation too strong to admit of its being forced. He here made several attempts to detach the Elector, who was now reduced to the greatest straits, from the French alliance; but that prince, relying on the great army, forty-five thousand strong, which Marshal Tallard was bringing up to his support from the Rhine, adhered with honourable fidelity to his engagements. Upon this Marlborough took post near Friedberg, in such a situation as to cut him off from all communication with his dominions, and ravaged the country with his light troops, levying contributions wherever they went, and burning the villages with savage ferocity as far as the gates of Munich. This proceeding was so contrary to the humane disposition of the English general, that it gave him the utmost pain to carry it into execution; but the peremptory commands of the Allied powers, and the vital importance, if possible, of detaching the Elector from the French interest, left him no alternative.* The inhabitants and magistrates of towns made him magnificent offers in money if he would suspend the orders; but he replied: "The troops of the Queen of England have not come into Bavaria to make money, but to compel the Elector to listen to reason." Three hundred towns or villages were consumed in this

* "We sent this morning three thousand horse to the Elector's chief city of Munich, with orders to burn and destroy all the country about it. This is so contrary to my nature, that nothing but absolute necessity could have obliged me to consent to it, for the poor people suffer for their master's ambition. There having been no war in this country for above sixty years, the towns and villages are so clean that you would be pleased with them. My nature suffers when I see so many fine places burnt, and that must be burnt, if the Elector will not hinder it. I shall never be easy and happy till I am quiet with you."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, July 30, 1704; COXE, i. 375, 376.

savage warfare. Thus was avenged the barbarous desolation of the Palatinate, thirty years before, by the French army under the orders of Marshal Turenne. Overcome by the cries of his suffering subjects, the Elector at length consented to enter into a negotiation, which made some progress ; but the rapid approach of Marshal Tallard with the French army through the Black Forest caused him to break it off and hazard all on the fortune of war.¹

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
334-341.
Coxe. i.
360-375.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 546-560.

Unable to induce the Elector, by the barbarities unhappily at that time too frequent on all sides in war, either to quit his intrenched camp under the cannon of Augsburg, or to abandon the French alliance, the English general undertook the siege of Ingolstadt, he himself, with the main body of the army, covering the siege, and Prince Louis of Baden conducting the operations in the trenches. Upon this the Elector of Bavaria broke up from his strong position, and abandoning with heroic resolution his own country, marched to Biberach, where he effected his junction with Marshal Tallard, who, after having wasted five days in a fruitless attack on Villingen, and forded the Danube at Mœskirch, had entered the Bavarian plains between Ulm and Memmingen. Prince Eugene had followed his movements by a parallel march with eighteen thousand men, and had reached Hochstedt, where he lay exposed to an attack from the united French and Bavarian armies, which lay between them. Eugene himself came across to Marlborough, to concert the means of junction and future operations ; but when he regained his own army, he found it was threatened with an immediate attack from the whole French forces. No sooner had he received intelligence of this, than Marlborough, on the 10th of August, sent

39.
Marshal
Tallard
joins the
Elector of
Bavaria,
who deter-
mines to
fight.

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the Duke of Wirtemberg with twenty-seven squadrons of horse to reinforce the prince, and early next morning detached General Churchill with twenty battalions across the Danube, to be in a situation to support him in case of need. He himself immediately after followed, and joined the Prince on the 11th, with his whole army, except the corps engaged in the siege of Ingolstadt. Everything now presaged decisive events. The Elector had boldly quitted Bavaria, leaving his whole dominions at the mercy of the enemy, except the fortified cities of Munich and Augsburg, and perilled his crown upon the issue of war at the French headquarters; while Marlborough and Eugene had united their forces, with a determination to give battle in the heart of Germany, in the enemy's territory, with their communications exposed to the utmost hazard, under circumstances where defeat could be attended with nothing short of total ruin.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 378-384.
Hist. de Marl. i. 346-354.
Hist. Mil. iv. 528-538.

40.
Vendôme is defeated in his attempt to penetrate through the Tyrol.

By the rapidity of his march, which had altogether outstripped the slower movements of Marshal Villeroy, who was still in the neighbourhood of the Moselle, Marlborough had defeated one important part of the combinations of the French king. But if Vendôme, with the Italian army, had succeeded in penetrating through the Tyrol, and joining the French and Bavarian armies to the north of the Alps, their united forces would have greatly preponderated over those of Marlborough and Eugene, and given them a decisive superiority for the whole remainder of the campaign. On this occasion, however, as subsequently in the wars of 1805 and 1809, the courage and loyalty of the Tyrolese proved the salvation of the Austrian monarchy. These sturdy mountaineers flew to arms; every defile was disputed—every castle required a separate siege. Accustomed to the use of arms from their

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earliest years, admirable marksmen, indefatigable in bearing fatigue, perfectly acquainted with the intricacies of their rugged country, they opposed so formidable a resistance to the advance of the French troops, that all the skill and perseverance of Vendôme were unable to overcome them. He got as far as Brixen, but could not succeed in forcing the passage above that town, or surmounting the crest of the Brenner. Thus Marshal Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria were left alone to make head against Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough; and the positions of the two armies, who were fully united on both sides, as well as the resolution of their respective commanders, presaged decisive events. As the enemy's position was strong, and their army known to be superior, several officers remonstrated with Marlborough on the risk of hazarding a general engagement, especially in the heart of a hostile country, where they were masters of scarcely any fortresses, and defeat would be certain ruin. He heard them with attention, and replied: "I know the danger; yet a battle is absolutely necessary, and I rely on the bravery and discipline of the troops, which will make amends for our disadvantages."¹

¹ Capefigue, Hist. de Louis XIV. 211, 213. Hist. Mil. iv. 357-373. Coxe, i. 386.

In numerical amount, however, the French and Bavarians were decidedly superior to the Allies. Their army consisted of sixty thousand men, of whom nearly forty-five thousand were French troops, the very best which the monarchy could produce, and they had ninety guns. Marlborough and Eugene, being much weakened by detachments in their rear, had only sixty-six battalions and a hundred and six squadrons, which, with the artillery, might be about fifty-six thousand combatants, with fifty-one guns. The forces on the opposite sides were thus nearly equal, in point of numerical amount; but there was a wide

41.
Forces on both sides, and their comparative merits.

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difference in their composition, and the artillery they had at their command. Four-fifths of the French army were national troops, speaking the same language, animated by the same feelings, accustomed to the same discipline, and the most of whom had been accustomed to act together. The Allies, on the other hand, were a motley assemblage, like Hannibal's at Cannæ,* or Wellington's at Waterloo, composed of the troops of many different nations, speaking different languages, trained to different discipline, but recently assembled together, and under the orders of a stranger general, one of those haughty islanders, little in the general case inured to war, but whose cold or supercilious manners had so often caused jealousies to arise in the best-concerted confederacies. English, Prussians, Danes, Wirtemburgers, Dutch, Hanoverians, and Hessians, were blended in such nearly equal proportions, that the arms of no one state could be said, by its numerical preponderance, to be entitled to the precedence. But the consummate address, splendid talents, and conciliatory manners of Marlborough, as well as the brilliant valour which the English auxiliary force had displayed on many occasions, had won for them the lead, as similar qualities had formerly done for their fathers when in no greater force among the confederates under Richard Cœur-de-Lion in the Holy Wars. It was universally felt that upon them, as on the Tenth Legion of Cæsar, or, afterwards, the Old Guard of Napoleon, the weight of the contest at the decisive moment would fall.¹

¹ Hist. Mil. iv. 589.
Coxe, i. 390. Hist. de Marl. i. 362. Hare's Journal, Marl. Des. i. 403.

* "Exercitus mixtus ex colluvione omnium gentium, quibus non lex, non mos, non lingua communis; alius habitus, alia vestis, alia arma, alii ritus, alia sacra." "An army made up of the dregs of all nations, which had no laws, customs, or language in common; whose dress, habits, arms, rites, and religion, were dissimilar."—LIVY, xxviii. c. 12.

The army was divided into two *corps-d'armée*; the first, commanded by the Duke in person, being by far the strongest, destined to bear the weight of the contest, and carry in front the enemy's position. These two corps, though co-operating, were at such a distance from each other that they were much in the situation of Napoleon's and Ney's corps at Bautzen. The second, under Prince Eugene, which consisted chiefly of cavalry, was much weaker in point of numerical amount, and was intended for a subordinate attack, to distract the enemy's attention from the principal onset in front under Marlborough.* With ordinary officers, or even eminent generals of a second order, a dangerous rivalry for the supreme command would unquestionably have

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42.
Division of
the com-
mand be-
tween Marl-
borough and
Eugene.

* The Allied and French armies stood thus :—

ALLIES.				FRENCH.			
I. <i>Right Wing</i> , EUGENE.				I. <i>Left Wing</i> , MARSIN.			
	Batt.	Squad.	Men.		Batt.	Squad.	Men.
Prussians, .	11	15	20,000	French, . .	29	50	18,000
Danes, .	7	0		Bavarians, .	13	37	12,000
Austrians, .	0	24					
Empire's, .	0	35					
	18	74					
II. <i>Centre and left</i> , MARLBOROUGH.				II. <i>Right and centre</i> , TALLARD.			
	Batt.	Squad.	Men.		Batt.	Squad.	Men.
English, .	14	14	36,000	French, . .	42	60	30,000
Dutch, . .	14	22					
Hessians, .	7	7					
Hanoverians, .	13	25					
Danes, . .	0	22			84	147	60,000
	48	86		Guns, . . .	90		
Total, . .	66	160	56,000				
Guns, . .	66						

—KAUSLER, 107-108. MARL. *Desp.* i. 402-408, and *Histoire Militaire du Guerre de la Succession*, iv. 557. The last work states the French and Bavarians at seventy-eight battalions and one hundred and forty-three squadrons; but that is from not taking into view the battalions of which two were melted into one in consequence of their weakness.

The estimate above given is that of Prince Eugene.—*Letter*, 25th August 1704; *Hist. Marl.* iv. 589.

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arisen, and added to the many seeds of division and causes of weakness which already existed in so multifarious an array. But these great men were superior to all such petty jealousies. Each, conscious of powers to do great things, and proud of fame already acquired, was willing to yield what was necessary for the common good to the other. Each was more proud of his rival's reputation than his own—more solicitous to give him an opportunity of augmenting it than to secure such an advantage to himself. They had no rivalry, save a noble emulation who should do most for the common cause in which they were jointly engaged. From the moment of their junction, it was agreed that they should take the command of the whole army day about; and so perfectly did their views on all points coincide, and so entirely did their noble hearts beat in unison, that during eight subsequent campaigns in which they for the most part acted together, there was never the slightest division between them, nor any interruption of the harmony with which the operations of the Allies were conducted. The records of human achievements can present few, if any, greater men; but beyond all question they can exhibit none in whom so pure and generous a friendship existed, alike unbroken by the selfishness consequent on adverse, and the jealousies springing from prosperous, fortune.

43.
French
position and
dispositions,
with their
dangers.

The French position was in places strong, and their disposition for resistance at each point where they were threatened by attack from the Allied forces, judicious; but there was a fatal defect in the general conception of their plan. Marshal Tallard was on the right, resting on the Danube, which secured him from being turned in that quarter, having the village of BLENHEIM in his front,

which was strongly garrisoned by twenty-six battalions and twelve squadrons, all native French troops; and Marsin's flank on the left was secured by a range of rugged steeps, impassable for guns or cavalry, and which, therefore, rendered any serious attack impossible in that quarter. In the centre was the village of Oberglau, which was occupied by fourteen battalions, among whom were three Irish corps of celebrated veterans. The rivulets which ran along their whole front, and the marshy ground traversed only by a few roads, all of which were strongly occupied, rendered an attack in front dangerous to the assailants, and certain to be extremely bloody to them. But the weakness lay in the connecting line between the villages, which was kept up only by horse. The communication between Blenheim and Oberglau was formed of a screen consisting of eighty squadrons, in two lines, having two brigades of foot consisting of seven battalions in its centre, and it might have been foreseen that, if the enemy got through the marshes, they would not be able to keep their ground. The left, opposite Prince Eugene, was under the orders of Marshal Marsin, and consisted of thirty-eight battalions of infantry and fifty-five squadrons, consisting for the most part of Bavarians and Marshal Marsin's men, posted in front of the village of Lutzingen. Thus the French consisted of eighty-four battalions and a hundred and forty-seven squadrons, with ninety guns, and they mustered sixty thousand combatants, about five thousand more than the Allies, and with a great superiority of artillery. They were posted in a line strongly supported at each extremity, but weak in the centre, and with the wings, where the great body of the infantry was placed, at

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such a distance from each other that, if the centre was broken through, each ran the risk of being enveloped by the enemy, without the other being able to render any assistance. This danger as to the troops in Blenheim, the flower of their army, was much augmented by the circumstance that, if their centre was forced where it was formed of cavalry only, and the victors turned sharp round towards Blenheim, the horse would be driven headlong into the Danube, and the foot in that village would run the hazard of being surrounded or pushed into the river, which was not fordable, even for horse, in any part.^{1*}

¹ Hist. de Marl. i. 361, 362. Coxe, i. 393, 394. Hare's Jour. Marl. Des. i. 400. Hist. Mil. iv. 589.

44.
And advantages.

But though these circumstances would, to a far-seeing general, have presaged serious disaster in the event of defeat, yet the position was strong in itself, and the French generals, long accustomed to victory, had some excuse for not having taken sufficiently into view the contingencies likely to occur in the event of defeat. Both the villages at the extremity of their line had been strengthened, not only with intrenchments hastily thrown up around them, thickly mounted with heavy cannon, but with barricades erected at all their principal entrances, formed of overturned carts, and all the furniture of the houses, which they had seized upon, as the insurgents did at Paris in 1830, for that purpose. The army stood upon a hill or gentle eminence, the guns from which commanded the whole plain by which alone it could be approached. This plain was low, and intersected by a rivulet which flows down by a gentle descent

* The distribution of the troops here given does not accord exactly with that previously set down on page 161 as the composition of Eugene and Marlborough's corps respectively, they being in a certain degree intermingled in the line.

to the Danube, and near Oberglau unites with two other rivulets, whose united streams flow down past Blenheim into that river. These rivulets had bridges over them at the points where they flowed through villages; but they were difficult of passage at other points for cavalry and artillery, and, with the ditches cut in the swampy meadows through which they flowed, proved no small impediment to the advance of the Allied army.¹

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¹ Coxe, i.
386-389.
Hist. de
Marib. i.
362-368.
Rousset, ii.
101-103.

The Duke of Marlborough, before the action began, visited in person each important battery, in order to ascertain the range of the guns. The troops under his command were drawn up in four lines, the infantry being in front, and the cavalry behind, in each line. This arrangement was adopted in order that the foot-soldiers, who would get easiest through the streams, might form on the other side, and cover the formation of the horse, who might be more impeded. The fire of cannon soon became very animated on both sides, and the infantry advanced to the edge of the rivulets with that cheerful air and confident step which is so often the forerunner of success. On Prince Eugene's side, however, the impediments proved serious: the beds of the rivulets were so broad that they required to be filled up with fascines before they could be passed by the guns; and when they did get across, though they replied, it was without much effect; while the French cannon thundered from the heights, which commanded the whole field. Two thousand men were struck down in all by the French cannon, which were much superior both in number and position, before the Allies got over the marshes.² At half-past twelve, nevertheless, these difficulties were, by great efforts on the part of Prince Eugene and his wing,

45.
Disposition
of the Allies
for the at-
tack.

² Hist. Mil.
iv. 585.
Coxe, ii.
385-387.

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46.

Marlbo-
rough's con-
duct before
the battle
began.

overcome, and he sent word to Marlborough that he was ready.

During this interval divine service had been performed at the head of every regiment and squadron in the Allied army; Marlborough himself had received the sacrament with great solemnity at midnight on the preceding day. So impressed was that great man with religious feelings at this momentous crisis, that, after the battle was over, he said "he had prayed to God more frequently, during its continuance, than all the chaplains of both armies put together, which served under his orders." He was seated on the ground, in the midst of his staff, eating a slender meal, when Eugene's aide-de-camp arrived. "Now, gentlemen, to your posts," said he, with the cheerful voice which betokened the confidence of victory, as he mounted his horse; and his aides-de-camp galloped off in every direction to warn the troops to be ready. Instantly the soldiers everywhere stood to their arms, and the signal was given to advance. As Marlborough rode along the line a cannon-ball struck the ground near him, and covered him with earth. All around trembled for the safety of their beloved chief, but he calmly continued his survey as if nothing had happened. The rivulets and marshy ground in front of Blenheim and Unterglau were passed by the first line without much difficulty, though the men were exposed to a heavy fire of artillery from the French batteries; and, the firm ground on the slope being reached, they advanced in the finest order to the attack—the cavalry in front having now defiled to a side, so as to let the English infantry take the lead.¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. i.
369-372.
Coxe, i.
365-369.
Rousset, ii.
191. Hist.
Mil. iv.
365-366.

The French did not expect, and were in a great measure unprepared for, an attack, when the heads of

the Allied columns were seen advancing against them. Their generals had taken up the idea that the enemy were about to retire to Nordlingen, and as the morning was hazy, the skirmishers of Eugene were close upon them before they were perceived.* Alarm guns were then immediately fired, officers galloped off in every direction, and Tallard and Marsin, hastily mounting their horses, did their utmost to put their troops in proper order. But no plan of defence had previously been arranged; and the troops were hastily thrown into the nearest villages, or such as seemed destined to be first the object of attack. Seven-and-twenty battalions in all were crowded into Blenheim, against which the English column of grenadiers were seen to be steadily advancing. Thirty battalions were posted in and around Oberglau; and Lutzingen was also strongly occupied, while eighteen French and Bavarian battalions were drawn up in an oblique line in the woods in its vicinity, on the extreme left of the cavalry. The guns were judiciously posted along the front of the line, in situations the best calculated to impede the enemy's advance; and, as they were greatly superior to the artillery of the Allies, they played upon their advancing lines with very great effect. But there was the essential defect already noticed in the position, that its two keys, Blenheim and Oberglau, where the main body of the infantry was posted,¹ were at such a distance from each other that neither their

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47.

Commence-
ment of the
battle.

Aug. 13.

¹ Hist. Mil.
iv. 507, 508.
Coxe, i.
393, 394,
397. Hist.
de Marl. i.
372, 373.
Cap. v.
216, 217.

* "Ce 13, au point du jour les ennemis ont battu la générale à 2 heures, à 3 l'assemblée. On les voit en bataille à la tête de leur camp, et suivant les apparences ils marcheront aujourd'hui. Le bruit du pays est qu'ils vont à Nordlingen. Si cela est, ils nous laisseront entre le Danube et eux, et par conséquent ils auront de la peine à soutenir les établissemens qu'ils ont pris en Bavière."—*Marshal Tallard au Roi de France, 13th August 1704. Campagnes de Tallard*, ii. 140.

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defenders nor their cannon could render any mutual assistance ; while the long intervening space was filled up by a line of horse, for the most part unsupported by foot-soldiers, and incapable of resisting a vigorous attack from the united bodies of infantry and cavalry which were posted opposite them on the side of the enemy.

48.
Attack on
Blenheim,
which is
repulsed.

Marlborough's eagle eye at once descried this glaring defect in the enemy's distribution of his forces, and he prepared to turn it to the best account. Lord Cutts commanded the division of British which advanced against Blenheim. General Rowe led the first line, consisting of five English battalions and four Hessians : they were supported by Lord Cutts, at the head of eleven battalions and fifteen squadrons. They were severely raked in moving up by four twenty-four pounders, which played with great vigour on the line ; but notwithstanding this they continued to advance, and reached the village. Rowe was within thirty yards of the palisades which the French had constructed at all the entrances of the village, when the enemy delivered their first fire of musketry. It was so close and well-directed that a great number of officers and men fell. But their comrades, nothing daunted, held bravely on ; and Rowe, moving straight forward, struck his sword on the palisades before he gave the word to fire. His order was to force an entrance with the bayonet : but the strength of the barriers, and the vast numerical superiority of the enemy in the village, rendered this impossible ; and the assailants, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, remained striving against the palisades, endeavouring to break them down by sheer strength, until half their number were struck down. Rowe himself fell badly

wounded at the foot of the pales, and his lieutenant-colonel and major were killed in endeavouring to carry him off. At this critical moment some squadrons of French *gens-d'armes* charged their flank, threw the assailants into confusion, and took the colours of Rowe's regiment—which, however, were immediately regained by the Hessians, who advanced to its support. Lord Cutts, upon this, seeing fresh squadrons of cavalry preparing to charge, sent forward to Lumley, who commanded the nearest Allied horse, for a reinforcement to cover his exposed flank, and five squadrons were immediately despatched across the Nebel to their support. They charged the enemy's horse gallantly, though double their force, and drove them headlong back. But fresh squadrons succeeded on the part of the French; a murderous fire in flank, from the enclosures of Blenheim, mowed down great numbers, and the whole recoiled in disorder to the Allied lines.¹

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¹ Hare's,
Journal.
Des. i. 402,
403. Coxe, i.
401, 402.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
373-375.
Rousset, ii.
104.

The English general, foreseeing that this success would be followed up by the enemy, and being satisfied that Blenheim was too strongly garrisoned to be carried by an assault of infantry unsupported by cavalry, resolved to bring his whole cavalry across the Nebel, and make a general attack upon the weak part of the enemy's line between Blenheim and Oberglau. Midway between the two, on the centre of a bend of that stream towards the English position, was situated the village of Unter-glau, which of course was first reached by the Allies. Marlborough sent forward Churchill with his division of infantry to attack that post; but before he reached it the whole houses were in flames, having been set on fire by the French to retard the advance of the Allies. The brave troops, however, rushed forward through the

49.
Crossing of
the Nebel
by the
Allies.

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conflagration, and having gained the bridge, which was of stone, soon began to deploy on the other side. No sooner did Marlborough see this than he gave orders for the whole cavalry to advance. They descended, headed by the English dragoons, rapidly and in good order, to the edge of the stream; but the difficulties of the passage were there greater than had been expected, as they had to cross the rivulet where it was divided, and the meadow between the branches was wet and very soft, and the streams themselves deep and muddy. However, by casting in fascines and boards, the bottom was at length rendered comparatively hard, and by great exertions the horses struggled through, though exposed all the while to a galling fire from the heavy guns posted around Blenheim. While this hazardous movement was going forward, Tallard, with inconceivable infatuation, abstained from attack, contenting himself with annoying the squadrons, as they successively got across, by the distant fire of his guns. The whole first line was over before he gave orders to his cavalry to charge them, apparently thinking that they would fall an easy prey. They were still in disorder on the opposite bank, and with their ranks yet unformed, when they were suddenly charged by the whole front line of the French cavalry, which bore down upon them in compact order and with flying banners.¹

¹ Hare's Journal, Marlb. Des. i. 403, 404. Kauser, 110, 111. Coxe, i. 402, 403. Hist. de Marlb. i. 375, 376. Rousset, ii. 104, 105.

50.
The cavalry with great difficulty are got across.

Formidable as this attack was, it was rendered still more so by the heavy fire of cannon and musketry which at the same time issued from the enclosures of Blenheim, and threw the whole nearest flank of the Allied horse into confusion. The second line, composed of the Danish and Hanoverian squadrons, however, was at length got across, and brought up by Marlborough to the

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support of the English dragoons ; and Churchill's men, intermingled with the horse near Oberglau, threw in their volleys with great effect upon the advancing cavalry of the enemy. It was only by their well-timed aid that a fatal rout was prevented before the horsemen could form on the opposite side. They could not, however, extend their succour far. Near Blenheim the dragoons were forced back in disorder to the very edge of the morass by the charges of French cavalry, aided by the terrible fire from the batteries at that village ; and it was only by great exertions, and constantly supporting the worsted squadrons by fresh troops as they were successively got across, that Marlborough succeeded in preventing an entire repulse in that quarter. As it was, a considerable number of the Allied horse were driven in disorder across the Nebel. By constantly bringing fresh troops across, however, and judiciously mingling some foot regiments with his horse, Marlborough gradually gained ground, and at length his whole horse between Blenheim and Oberglau were got across, and formed in two lines on the opposite side. But meanwhile a serious disaster had occurred on the British right, where Prince Holstein, with his Hanoverians, was directing the attack on Oberglau ; and the presence of the commander-in-chief was loudly called for, to prevent entire ruin in that quarter.¹

¹ Hare's
Journal.
Marlb. Des.
i. 404, 405.
Cap. v. 213.
Coxe, i.
405. Hist.
de Marl. i.
373, 379.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 597, 598.

Prince Holstein had no sooner crossed the stream, at the head of eleven battalions, and ere his men had time to form in good order on the opposite side, than he was charged with great vigour by the French infantry in Oberglau, nine thousand strong, including the Irish brigade, who debouched with loud shouts out of the village. This brave body of veterans, who had become

51.
Rout of
Prince Hol-
stein in the
attack on
Oberglau.

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admirable troops from the superinducing of French discipline and guidance on native Irish valour, charged with such vehemence, and threw in volleys so quick and well-directed, that the Prince's men were utterly routed, he himself taken prisoner, and the centre of the Allies entirely broken through. There was not a moment to be lost, for the communication with Prince Eugene and the right wing of the army was on the point of being cut off. But Marlborough was at hand to repair the disaster; and he not only did so, but converted it into an advantage to his own side, which proved decisive. Galloping instantly to the spot, he led up in person some squadrons of British cavalry, closely followed by three battalions which had not been engaged. With the horse he charged the Irish, who, with the inconsiderate ardour of their nation, were pursuing their advantage in disorder, and quickly threw them into confusion. The infantry he posted so advantageously that their fire raked the column as it recoiled from the charge, and occasioned dreadful slaughter. The Irish were by this double attack driven back into Oberglau; while some squadrons of French horse, whom Marshal Marsin sent up to their relief, were repelled by the fire of a battery, which Marlborough brought forward from Weilheim, and a powerful body of Imperial horse which he stationed on its flank. By this well-timed vigour affairs were re-established in the centre, and the communication with Prince Eugene was completely recovered.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 404, 405.
Hare's Journal.
Marlb. Des. i. 404-406.
Kausler, 110, 111.
Hist. de Marl. i. 378, 379.
Marshal Marsin's Official Account, Hist. Mil. iv. 559, 560.

52.
Operations of Eugene on the right.

Having achieved this great advantage, Marlborough returned to his cavalry between Oberglau and Blenheim, and found it all firmly established on solid ground on the other side of the Nebel. Meanwhile, Eugene had been actively engaged on the extreme right, where

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he too had crossed the Nebel in front of Lutzingen. His first attack, with the Danes and Prussians, carried a battery of six guns, and the Imperial horse broke the first line of French cavalry; but having advanced somewhat in disorder against the second line, they were not only repulsed, but driven back across the Nebel, and the guns were retaken. The victorious infantry were now isolated in the midst of enemies, and being charged vehemently on each flank, at the same time that a heavy fire in front shook their line, the Prussians and Danes were thrown into confusion, and with difficulty regained their original ground on the other side of the river. Nothing daunted by this reverse, Eugene rallied his cavalry, and led them again to the charge; but though at first successful, they were at length checked by the stout Bavarian horse, bravely headed by the Elector, and recoiled in disorder. A third time Eugene re-formed his horsemen, and led them to the attack, himself heading the charge. But this time the onset was feeble; the men were daunted by their double repulse; their line was speedily broken, and they again fled, completely routed, across the Nebel. In utter despair, Eugene left the Prince of Hanover and Duke of Wirtemberg to rally the horse, and himself galloped off to put himself at the head of the infantry, which had also advanced with the cavalry. That brave body of men, admirably disciplined, and encouraged by the presence of their general, stood their ground with heroic resolution. But they were charged with desperate hardihood by the enemy. Eugene himself was in the most imminent danger of being shot by a Bavarian dragoon, who was cut down while deliberately taking aim at him within a few paces.¹ With his own hand he shot two of the Austrian horsemen

¹ Mem. de Tallard, ii. 234-241. Marshal Marsin's Des. Hist. Mil. iv. 559, 560. Hare's Jour. Marl. Des. i. 406, 407. Hist. de Marl. i. 378, 379. Rousset, ii. 105.

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who were the first to turn, and in person led the cavalry back against the enemy. The admirable steadiness of the Prussians, who on this occasion gave tokens of what they were to become under the great Frederick, prevented a total defeat in this quarter. Immovable, they stood their ground amidst the thundering charges of horse, the front rank kneeling, and the rear maintaining a ceaseless rolling fire, till at length the enemy, wearied with fruitless efforts, drew off, leaving the ground covered with their wounded and dying.

53.
Grand and
decisive
charge by
Marlbo-
rough in the
centre.

Marlborough, however, had now gained firm footing both with his infantry and cavalry on the other side of the Nebel, and had made his dispositions for a general attack between Blenheim and Oberglau. The cavalry were drawn up in two lines directly in front of the enemy; the infantry immediately in their rear, chiefly to the left, to make head against the numerous battalions which occupied Blenheim. Tallard, seeing the weakness of his line from want of infantry, had drawn nine battalions from the reserve, and posted them near the centre, between Blenheim and Oberglau, behind the horse. Marlborough brought up three Hessian battalions to front them, and then, drawing his sword, ordered the trumpets to sound the advance, he himself leading them on. Indescribably grand was the spectacle which ensued. In compact order, and the finest array, the Allied cavalry, mustering eight thousand sabres, moved up the gentle slope in two lines — at first slowly, as on a field day, but gradually more quickly, as they drew nearer, and the fire of the artillery became more violent. The French horse, ten thousand strong, stood their ground at first firmly: the choicest and bravest of their chivalry were there: the banderoles of almost

all the nobles in France floated over their squadrons. So hot was the fire of musketry and cannon when the assailants drew near that their advance was checked: they retired sixty paces, and the battle was kept up for a few minutes only by a fire of artillery. Gradually, however, the fire of the enemy slackened; and Marlborough, taking advantage of the pause, led his cavalry again to the charge. With irresistible vehemence, the line dashed forward at full speed, and soon the crest of the ridge was passed. The French horsemen discharged their carbines at a considerable distance with little effect, and immediately wheeled about and fled. The battle was gained: the Allied horse rapidly inundated the open space between the two villages; the nine battalions in the middle were surrounded, cut to pieces, or taken. They made a noble resistance, and the men were found lying on their backs in their ranks as they had stood in the field.¹ *

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¹ Kausler, 109-111.
Coxe, i.
109. Hare's
Jour. Marl.
Des. i. 406,
407. Coxe,
i. 409. Hist.
de Marl. i.
379, 380.
Rousset, ii.
105.

The consequences of this great disaster on the right were speedily felt along the whole French line. Marsin's cavalry, now entirely uncovered on their flanks, rapidly fell back to avoid being turned, and rendered the position of the infantry in front of Eugene no longer

54.
Eugene's
success on
the right.

* It is to the misconduct of their cavalry on this occasion that Tallard and the French authorities ascribe the loss of the battle. "Le gros de la cavalerie," says Tallard, "*à mal fait, je dis très mal*, car on n'a jamais rompre un escadron des ennemis. J'ai pourtant vu un instant où la bataille étoit gagnée par la brigade de Robuq et celle de Albaret, [the nine battalions,] si la cavalerie que s'étoit avancé plus près des ennemis à la faveur de l'infanterie, qu'il n'avait fait auparavant, *n'aurait tourné tout d'un coup*, et abandonné cette pauvre infanterie."—Tallard's official account of the battle, *Hist. Mil.* iv. 568. "Il est certain que la gendarmerie et la cavalerie de M. Tallard sont la cause de la perte de cette grande bataille; que nous avons trop de bataillons à notre droite, et eux dans le centre, nous en manquaient."—*Lettre de M. le Baron de Montigny Langnat*, 25th August 1704; *Hist. Mil.* iv. 588, (an eye-witness, wounded in the action.)

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tenable. That skilful general, perceiving the rout of the enemy on his left, and correctly judging that they could no longer maintain their ground, prepared his troops for a fourth charge, and soon issued forth at their head. The impulse of victory was now communicated to the whole line. After an arduous struggle in the plain, the enemy fell back at all points towards Oberglan and Lutzingen. Soon the flames, which burst forth from their buildings, announced that they were about to be evacuated. At this sight, loud cheers arose from the whole right, and the Danes and Prussians rushed forward with irresistible vigour against the burning villages. After an obstinate conflict, Lutzingen was carried, and the Bavarians were driven to a fresh position in rear, behind the streamlet of the same name. They still preserved their ranks, however, and faced about fiercely on their pursuers; but Marsin, having lost the pivot of his left, and seeing his flank entirely uncovered by Marlborough's advance, and the centre driven back in disorder, gave orders for the general retreat of his wing.¹

¹ Kausler, 113. Coxé, i. 412. Hare's Journal. Marl. Des. i. 407, 408. Hist. de Marl. i. 379, 380. Hist. Mil. iv. 599, 600.

55.
Total rout of Tallard, who is made prisoner.

Meanwhile Tallard, whose personal intrepidity was as conspicuous as his foresight was defective, was bravely exerting himself, but in vain, to arrest the disorder in the right and centre. He drew up the remains of his cavalry in battle array, behind the tents of his camp, in a single line stretching towards Blenheim, in order, if possible, to extricate the infantry posted in that village, which were now wellnigh cut off. At the same time he sent pressing requests to Marsin for assistance. But ere succour could arrive, or time had even been gained for the delivery of his messages, the hand of fate was upon him. Marlborough, observing that the line

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was unsupported in rear, and uncovered on its right, gave orders for a general charge of all his cavalry. When the trumpet sounded, eight thousand horsemen, flushed with victory, bore down *in two lines*, with irresistible force, on the now dispirited and attenuated line of the enemy. The immense body of the French force, who were discouraged by having no support in rear, broke without awaiting the shock, and the Allied cavalry rapidly piercing their centre, they were divided into two parts, one of which fled in wild disorder towards the Danube, and the other towards Hochstedt. Marlborough in person followed the first with fifty squadrons, while Hompesch with thirty pressed upon the second. Both pursuits proved entirely successful. Marlborough drove the broken mass before him headlong to the Danube, where great numbers were drowned in attempting to cross, and the remainder were made prisoners on the brink. Marshal Tallard himself, with a small body of horse, which still kept their ranks, threw himself into the village of Sonderheim, on the margin of the river; but, being speedily surrounded by the victorious squadrons of the enemy, he was obliged to surrender, and delivered his sword to the Prince of Hesse. Hompesch, at the same time, vigorously pressed on the broken fugitives who had fled towards Hochstedt, and on the way surrounded three battalions of infantry, who were striving to escape, and made them prisoners. Upon seeing this, the cavalry entirely broke their ranks, and fled as fast as their horses could carry them towards Morselingen, without attempting any further resistance.¹

¹ Coxe, i. 410, 411.
Mem. de Tallard, ii. 248-252.
Hist. de Marl. i. 381-384.
Rousset, ii. 106.

When Tallard was taken, Marlborough immediately sent his own carriage to accommodate him, and des-

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56.

Mistake by
which the
French left
escaped de-
struction.

patched a pencil note, written on the parapet of a bridge, to the Duchess, to say the battle was gained.* But no sooner was this done than he set himself to render his victory complete, by turning all the forces he could collect against the portions of the enemy's army which still held their ground. He first directed his attention to the left wing of the enemy, which was falling back, closely followed by Eugene's horse, in the direction of Morselingen. Several squadrons were added to Hompesch's division; and the Duke was preparing to lead them on in person upon the flank of the column, which was defiling along the skirt of the wood. In the dusk of the evening, however, and with the view obscured by the volumes of smoke which were wafted from the field, the Bavarian and French troops were mistaken by Marlborough and his staff for Eugene's men in pursuit, and the charge, when on the point of being executed, was therefore countermanded. Thus the enemy on that side escaped without serious loss. This accidental mistake alone saved the French left from the utter ruin which had already overtaken the centre, and was soon to involve the right wing.¹

¹ Kausler, 113. Coxe, i. 413. Hist. Mil. iv. 600.

57.

Capture of
all the
troops in
Blenheim,
and conclu-
sion of the
battle.

Marlborough now turned all his forces against the troops in Blenheim, which, entirely cut off from the remainder of the army, and enveloped in darkness, were in a situation wellnigh desperate. To prevent the possibility of their escape, Webb, with the Queen's regiment, took possession of a barrier the enemy had

* This note is still preserved at Blenheim: "I have not time to say more, but beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know that her army has had a glorious victory. Monsieur Tallard and two other generals are in my coach; and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-camp, Colonel Park, will give her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another, and more at large,—MARLBOROUGH."—COXE, i. 413.

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constructed at one of the outlets of the village, to cover their retreat towards the eastward, and having posted his men across the street which led to the Danube, several hundred of the enemy, who were attempting to make their escape that way, were made prisoners. Prince George's regiment in like manner occupied the other issue towards the Danube, and all who came out that way were immediately captured. Others endeavoured to break out at other places, but Lord John Hay, at the head of his regiment of *Scots Greys*,* speedily met them at the top of a rising ground, and, making them believe his troops were but the advanced guard of a larger force, stopped them on that side. When Churchill saw the defeat of the enemy's horse in the centre decided, he sent to request Lord Cutts to attack Blenheim in front, while he himself assailed it in flank. This was accordingly done: Orkney and General Ingolsby entering the village at the same time, in two different places, at the head of their respective regiments. But the French made so vigorous a resistance, especially at the churchyard, that they were forced to retire. Marlborough, however, now brought up his guns on all sides, and opened a fire on the village. Soon several houses took fire, and the flames, casting a red light over the sky, enabled the gunners to direct their fire with unerring aim. M. Clerambault, their commander, had already fled, and been drowned in endeavouring to cross the Danube;¹ and the troops, having lost all hope, and being entirely cut off, at length, after vainly endeavour-

¹ Hare's
Journal.
Marlb. Des.
i. 408, 409.
Kausler,
112. Coxe,
i. 46. Cap.
Hist. de
Louis XIV.
v. 218, 219.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
392-400.

* This regiment might have *Blenheim* and *Waterloo*, the two greatest defeats France ever experienced in fair fight, on their colours, joined to Napoleon's words, "Ces terribles chevaux gris, comme ils travaillent !" Few regiments in Europe would have so glorious an emblazonry.

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ing to obtain a capitulation, surrendered at discretion. With despair and indignation the soldiers submitted to their fate. The regiment of Navarre burnt their colours and buried their arms, that such trophies might not remain to grace the triumph of their enemies ; and the real friends of France, who mourned her disgrace as they would have done a personal humiliation, loudly expressed their grief and despair on the occasion.*

58.
Results of
the battle.

In this battle Marlborough's wing lost 5000 men, and Eugene's 6000—in all 11,000. The French lost 13,000 private men made prisoners, and 1200 officers, almost all taken by Marlborough's wing, besides 34 pieces of cannon, 25 standards, and 90 colours : Eugene took 13 pieces more. The killed alone were no less than 12,000 ; and this is admitted by the French historians themselves. † The total loss of the French and Bavarians, including those who deserted during their calamitous retreat through the

* “Que pouvaient faire,” said Villars, “de mieux les troupes de Blenheim, disent quelques imbécilles, que de se rendre pour se conserver au Roi ? Je leur répond comme le vieux Horace, apprenant que son fils avait pris la fuite ; et je dis avec Corneille à ceux qui me demandent, ‘Que voulez-vous que fit ce corps ?’

‘Qu’il mourut,

Où qu’un beau désespoir alors se secourut.’

“C’est ainsi qu’à la bataille de Roeroi, l’infanterie Espagnole, commandée par le vieux Comte de Fuentes, aima mieux périr que de demander quartier. Les soldats et les officiers n’auroient-ils pas au moins de tenter de s’ouvrir un passage l’épée à la main, et préférer une mort glorieuse à la honte de mourir de faim dans une prison ? Je rougis pour les François d’une conduite aussi deshonorable ; et je vois avec un chagrin inexprimable combien nous sommes au-dessous des anciens Romains, et même de quelques-uns de nos compatriotes que j’ai connus.”—*Letter de Marshal Villars ; Hist. de Marlborough*, i. 400, 401. These are noble sentiments, with which the brave and the generous in every age and country will sympathise ; and the people of that gallant country may congratulate themselves upon their having so much more frequently appeared in the actions of their countrymen than such mournful catastrophes as Villars here deplores.

† “On convient assez généralement de douze mille François ou Bava-
rois

Black Forest, was not less than 40,000 men*—a number greater than any which France sustained till the still more disastrous day of Waterloo. Marlborough, with generous but not undeserved consideration for his illustrious colleague in the command, bestowed the highest praise on his conduct on the occasion, saying, that if his good fortune on that day had been equal to his merit, the war would have been terminated on the field of battle.† As a compliment to him, Marlborough divided the prisoners equally with Eugene, though they had nearly all been taken by himself; reserving only Marshal Tallard and a few superior officers as a distinction to the real victor. It is remarkable that by far the greatest defeats ever experienced by the French *on land*, Cressy, Azincour, Poitiers, Blenheim, Ramilies, Oudenarde, Salamanca, Vittoria, Waterloo, all came from the arms of England.¹ At Leipsic they were not beaten in a fair

¹ Hist. de Marl. i. 403-405. Coxe, ii. 4-11.

morts sur le champ de bataille, ce qui fait présumer un bien grand nombre de blessés.—*Hist. de Marl.* ii. 13.

* CARDONNELL, *Desp. to Lord Harley*, 25th Sept. 1704, *Desp.* i. 410. By intercepted letters it appeared the enemy admitted a loss of 40,000 men before they reached the Rhine.—*Marlborough to the Duke of Shrewsbury*, 28th Aug. 1704, *Desp.* i. 439. See also *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 28th Aug. “By the letters we have intercepted of the enemy’s going to Paris from their camp at Dutlingen, they own to a loss of 40,000 men.”—COXE, ii. 9. Of the whole officers, 4500 strong, in their army, only 250 were not taken, killed, or wounded.—COXE, ii. 12.

† “I am so fatigued with having been seventeen hours yesterday on horse-back, and only able to sleep three hours last night, that I can write to none of my friends. But I can’t end my letter without being so vain as to tell my dearest soul, that, within the memory of man, there has not been such a victory as this; and as I am sure you love me entirely well, you will be infinitely pleased with what has been done. For, had the success of *Prince Eugene been equal to his merit, we should, in that day’s action, have made an end of the war.* My dearest life, if we could have another day such as Wednesday last, I should then hope we might have such a peace as that I might enjoy the remainder of my life with you.”—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, Aug. 14 and 18, 1704; COXE, ii. 8, 9.

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59.
Causes of
the defeat of
the French.

field, but overthrown by an overwhelming superiority of force.

It is quite evident to what cause the astonishing magnitude of this defeat of the French army was owing. The strength of the position consisted solely in the rivulets and marshy grounds in its front, and when they were passed, the error of Marshal Tallard's disposition of his troops was at once apparent. The infantry was accumulated in useless numbers in the villages. Of the twenty-seven battalions in Blenheim, twenty were of no service, and could not get into action, while the long line of cavalry from thence to Oberglau was sustained only by a few battalions of foot, incapable of making any effective resistance. This was the more inexcusable, as the French, having sixteen battalions of infantry more than the Allies, should at no point have shown themselves inferior in foot-soldiers to their opponents. When the curtain of horse which stretched from Blenheim to Oberglau was broken through and driven off the field, the thirteen thousand infantry accumulated in the former of these villages could not escape falling into the enemy's hands ; for they were pressed between Marlborough's victorious foot and horse on the one side, and the unfordable stream of the Danube on the other. But the English general, it is evident, evinced the capacity of a great commander in the manner in which he surmounted these obstacles, and took advantage of these faulty dispositions ; resolutely, in the first instance, overcoming the numerous impediments which opposed the passage of the rivulets, and then accumulating his horse and foot for a grand attack on the enemy's centre, which, besides destroying above half the troops assembled there, and driving thirty squadrons into the Danube, cut off and

isolated the powerful body of infantry now ruinously crowded together in Blenheim, and compelled them to surrender.

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Immense were the results of this transcendent victory. The French army, lately so confident in its numbers and prowess, retreated, "or rather fled," as Marlborough says, through the Black Forest, abandoning the Elector of Bavaria and all the fortresses on the Danube to their fate. In the deepest dejection and the utmost disorder they reached the Rhine, scarce twelve thousand strong, on the 25th August, and immediately began defiling over by the bridge of Strasburg.* How different from the triumphant army, forty-five thousand strong, which, with drums beating and colours flying, had crossed at the same place six weeks before! Marlborough now raised the siege of Ingolstadt, and, having detached part of the force which had been thus engaged to besiege Ulm, drew near with the bulk of his army to the Rhine, which he passed near Philipsburg on the

60.
Vast results
of the vic-
tory.

* The following letter, from an officer in the French army, paints the consternation which followed the battle of Blenheim:—

"Je vous dirai que Mercredi 13 Août il s'en donné la plus sanglante bataille qu'on ait vue de mémoire d'homme, et dans laquelle nous avons été entièrement défait. M. de Tallard est blessé, et fait prisonnier avec beaucoup d'autres généraux; MM. de Surlaube et Blainville morts; toute l'infanterie abîmée ou faite prisonnière; M. de Tavanès, colonel, le Comte de Verne, général de la cavalerie, et le Marquis de Bellefonde tués sur le place. M. de Montperon, autre général de la cavalerie, blessé. Nous courons à perdre haleine depuis deux jours, et nous ne sommes arrivés à Ulm (rendezvous au débris de l'armée) que tout à l'heure, y ayant neuf bonnes heures de là au champ de bataille. Nous étions derrière l'infanterie, qui a été *respoussé six fois*, et nous l'avions toujours soutenue: elle est entièrement défaite, tous les officiers tués ou blessés, hors M. de Precher, qui se porte aussi bien que moi, qui ai fait comme beaucoup d'autres, les généraux nous donnant l'exemple. Ce matin MM. de Courtebonne de Bourg, et d'Huricières sont échappés, s'étant sauvés sur le chemin d'Ulm; enfin *toute l'armée est dans une consternation terrible*; nous avons perdus nos timbales et étendards."—*Lettre Originale dans CAPEFIGUE, Histoire de Louis XIV.* v. 321.

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6th September, and advanced towards Landau, on the French side. Villeroi with the French army abandoned an intrenched camp on the banks of the Queich, which he had constructed to cover the town. Marlborough followed, and made every effort to bring the French marshal to battle ; but in vain. He fell back first behind the Lauter, and then behind the Motter, abandoning a rugged wooded country, one of the strongest in Europe, without firing a shot. The cannon of Blenheim still resounded in his ears. Ulm surrendered on the 11th September, with 250 pieces of cannon and 1200 barrels of powder, which gave the Allies a solid foundation on the Danube, and effectually crushed the power of the Elector of Bavaria, who, isolated now in the midst of his enemies, had no alternative but to abandon his dominions, and seek refuge in Brussels, where he arrived in the end of September.¹

¹ Hist. Mil.
iv. 605-617.
Hist. de
Marlb. i.
401-407.

61.
Capture of
Landau and
Traerbach,
and conclu-
sion of the
campaign.

Upon the 12th September, Landau was invested, Prince Louis, with twenty thousand men, forming the besieging force, and Eugene and Marlborough, with thirty thousand, the covering army, which took post at Cron-Weissemberg. Perceiving that this siege was likely to last some time, and anxious, before the conclusion of the campaign, to push his conquests as far as the Moselle, so that the next year might commence with the invasion of France, Marlborough determined to divide the covering force. Leaving Eugene, accordingly, with the larger portion in the lines, the English general set out with twelve thousand men on the 14th October. He traversed a wild and inhospitable country covered with wood, and both men and horses were sorely worn down by fatigue, when, on the 26th, he reached St Wendal. At this place, which is eight leagues distant

from Trêves, he received intelligence of the near approach of ten thousand French troops, who were advancing to cover that important town. Not a moment was to be lost. Setting out, accordingly, on the morning of the 28th, Marlborough reached and occupied Trêves upon the 29th, the garrison of three hundred men evacuating the citadel upon his approach. He immediately collected six thousand peasants, whom he employed to restore the fortifications, and put the town in a posture of defence, and marched upon Traerbach, which was garrisoned by six hundred men. Here he was joined by twelve Dutch battalions from the Meuse, and, having formed the investment of the place, he left the Prince of Hesse to conduct the siege, which speedily ended in its surrender, and returned back with all haste to his old camp at Cron-Weissemburg. This whole expedition, which advanced the standards of the Allies to the Moselle, occupied only twenty-one days, and occasioned hardly the loss of a man. Its success gave Marlborough the highest satisfaction, as showing the French that their frontiers were not invulnerable.* Meanwhile, as the siege of Landau was found to require more time than had been anticipated, owing to the extraordinary difficulties experienced in getting up supplies and forage for the troops, Marlborough, leaving Eugene to conduct the siege, repaired to Hanover and Berlin to stimulate the Prussian and Hanoverian cabinets to greater exertions in the common cause ; and he succeeded, by his extraordinary address and conciliatory manners, in making arrangements for the addition of eight thousand Prussian

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Oct., 29.

* Writing to Godolphin upon this subject, he says, "I reckon this campaign as well over, since the winter-quarters are settled on the Moselle, which I think will give France as much uneasiness as anything that has been done this summer."—COXE, ii. 36.

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troops to their valuable auxiliary force, to be added to the army of the Imperialists in Italy, which stood much in need of reinforcement, as the Duke of Savoy had been reduced to the last extremity by the French, and only saved from utter ruin by extraordinary exertions of gallantry. The Electress of Bavaria, who had been left Regent of that state in the absence of the Elector in Flanders, had now no resource left but submission ; and a treaty was accordingly concluded in the beginning of November, by which she agreed to disband all her troops, and make peace with the Allies. The Hungarian insurrection was suppressed ; Landau capitulated towards the end of November, its garrison of seven thousand having been reduced to three thousand six hundred, who were made prisoners ; and the campaign being now finished, the English general returned to the Hague and London to receive the honour due for his past services, and urge their respective cabinets to the efforts necessary to turn them to good account.¹

¹ Coxe, ii.
37-57.

62.
Its marvellous results.

Thus by the operations of one single campaign was Bavaria crushed, Austria saved, and Germany delivered. Marlborough's cross march from Flanders to the Danube had extricated the Imperialists from a state of the utmost peril, and elevated them at once to security, victory, and conquest. The decisive blow struck at Blenheim resounded through every part of Europe : it at once destroyed the vast fabric of power which it had taken Louis XIV., aided by the talents of Turenne, and the genius of Vauban, so long to construct. Instead of proudly descending the valley of the Danube, and threatening Vienna, as Napoleon afterwards did in 1805 and 1809, the French were driven in the utmost disorder across the Rhine. The surrender of Traerbach

and Landau gave the Allies a firm footing on the left bank of that river. The submission of Bavaria deprived the French of that great outwork, of which they have always made such good use in their German wars; the Hungarian insurrection, disappointed of the expected aid from the armies on the Rhine, was pacified. Prussia was induced by this great triumph to co-operate in a more efficient manner in the common cause—she sent eight thousand men across the Alps, to aid the Duke of Savoy in defending his dominions; the parsimony of the Dutch gave way before the joy of success; and the Empire, delivered from invasion, was preparing to carry its victorious arms into the heart of France. Such achievements require no comment—they speak for themselves, and deservedly place Marlborough in the very highest rank of military commanders. The campaigns of Napoleon exhibit no more decisive or important results.

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Honours and emoluments of every description were showered on the English hero for this glorious success. He was created a prince of the Holy Roman Empire,* and a tract of land in Germany, at Mindelsheim, erected into a principality in his favour. His humanity to the wounded, alike of the enemy's army and his own, and his courtesy to the vanquished, were the theme of uni-

63.
Honours
and rewards
bestowed on
Marlbo-
rough.

* The holograph letter of the Emperor, announcing this honour, said, with equal truth and justice—"I am induced to assign to your highness a place among the princes of the Empire, in order that it may universally appear how much I acknowledge myself and the Empire to be indebted to the Queen of Great Britain, who sent her arms as far as Bavaria at a time when the affairs of the Empire, by the defection of the Bavarians to the French, most needed that assistance and support:—And to your Grace, likewise, to whose prudence and courage, together with the bravery of the forces fighting under your command, the two victories lately granted by Providence to the Allies are principally attributed, not only by the voice of fame, but by the general officers in my army who had their share in your labour and your glory."—*The Emperor Leopold to Marlborough*, 28th August 1704; *Desp.* i. 538.

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versal admiration. The coolness with which he gave his orders in the hottest of the fire, and the admirable presence of mind with which he carried succour to every part of the field which required it, were admitted by all to have caused the triumph. On one occasion he met an officer flying at the head of his troop out of the reach of fire. "You are wrong," said Marlborough, "you will not find the enemy there; the enemy is on the other side." The officer turned with his troop and repulsed his pursuers. He had repeatedly been in imminent danger during the battle: on one occasion a cannon-ball grazed his horse, and wounded it badly; on another he was covered with earth torn up at his feet by a twenty-four pounder. In company with Eugene he visited Marshal Tallard the day after the battle, offering every comfort and accommodation which it was in his power to bestow, and charming every heart by the great kindness of his manner. "I am sorry," said Marlborough to Tallard, "that so great a catastrophe should have happened to a warrior for whom I entertain so high a respect." "On my part," answered Tallard, "I congratulate you upon having vanquished the best troops in the world." "Allow me," replied Marlborough, "to believe that mine are the best in the world, since they have conquered those whom you regard as such." Among the prisoners was a common soldier, whose gallantry during the action had particularly attracted the notice of the English general. "Your master," said he to him, "would be invincible if he had many soldiers such as you." "My King," answered the soldier, "does not want soldiers such as me, but a general such as you."¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
1-23.

His reception at the courts of Berlin and Hanover resembled that of a sovereign prince; the acclamations

of the people, in all the towns through which he passed, rent the air ; at the Hague his influence was such that he was regarded as the real Stadtholder. More substantial rewards awaited him in his own country. The munificence of the Queen and the gratitude of Parliament conferred upon him the extensive Honour and manor of Woodstock, long a royal palace, and once the scene of the loves of Henry II. and the Fair Rosamond. By order of the Queen, not only was this noble estate settled on the Duke and his heirs, but the royal comptroller commenced a magnificent palace for the Duke on a scale worthy of his services and England's gratitude. From this origin the superb palace of Blenheim has taken its rise, which, although not built in the purest taste, or after the most approved models, remains, and will long remain, a splendid monument of a nation's gratitude, and of the genius of Vanbrugh. But a yet more enduring monument was raised in the lines of the poet, which, even at this distance of time, are felt to be deserved :—

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64.

His reception at the courts of Berlin and Hanover, and acquisition of Blenheim.

“ ’Twas then great Marlborough’s mighty soul was proved,
That in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examined all the dreadful scenes of war,
In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid ;
Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
So when an angel, by Divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land—
Such as of late o’er pale Britannia past—
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast ;
And pleased the Almighty’s orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.”

—ADDISON.

CHAPTER IV.

CAMPAIGNS OF 1705 AND 1706.—BATTLE OF RAMILIES AND
CONQUEST OF FLANDERS.

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1.

Impossibility of getting the English to make durable public efforts.

It is remarkable that while the English people are the nation of all others recorded in history set on practical objects, and the acquisition of ultimate benefit in return for present sacrifices, they are the one which, in every age, has most frequently sacrificed or foregone the fruits of the victory, and suffered the greatest national sacrifices, the most heroic public achievements, to remain without any lasting benefit to the country. There is no nation which has gained so many victories, there is none which has derived so little benefit from them. If a great success has been obtained, the people immediately expect that the contest is to be over, and remonstrate against any farther expense. If a glorious peace has been concluded, the cry for economy invariably becomes so strong, that such a reduction of the national armaments takes place that disaster is certain to be incurred on the next breaking out of hostilities, by which all its advantages are wellnigh lost. In periods of disaster, or under the influence of general terror, they have often made extraordinary and almost incredible efforts, and continued them for a very long time together ; but it has always been found impossible to get them to continue these efforts

when the peril obvious to every capacity is once over. The moment that is the case, the cry for economy revives, and the resistance to vigorous efforts becomes so great that the whole advantages of previous successes are often sacrificed.

The year which followed the battle of Blenheim afforded a memorable example of the truth of these observations. Notwithstanding the invaluable services thus rendered by Marlborough, both to the Emperor of Germany and the Queen of Great Britain, he was far from experiencing from either potentate that liberal support for the future prosecution of the war which the inestimable opportunity now placed in their hands, and the formidable power still at the disposal of the enemy, so loudly required. As usual, the English Parliament were exceedingly backward in voting supplies either of men or money; nor was the cabinet of Vienna or that of the Hague inclined to be more liberal in their exertions. Though the House of Commons agreed to give £4,670,000 for the service of the ensuing year, yet the land forces voted were only forty thousand men. The population of Great Britain and Ireland could not be at that period under ten millions, while France, with about twenty millions, had above two hundred thousand under arms. It is this excessive and invariable reluctance of the English Parliament ever to make those efforts at the *commencement* of a war, which are necessary to turn to a good account the inherent bravery of its inhabitants, that is the cause of the long duration of our Continental contests, and of three-fourths of the national debt which now oppresses the empire, and, in its ultimate results, will endanger its existence. The national forces are, by the cry for economy and reduc-

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2.

Backward-
ness of the
English
Parliament
in voting
supplies.

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tion which invariably is raised in peace, reduced to so low an ebb that it is only by successive additions, made in many different years, that they can be raised up to anything like the amount requisite for successful operations. In the mean time, and before the requisite additions can be made to the land and sea forces, disasters, sometimes serious and irreparable, are sustained on both elements. Thus disaster generally occurs in the commencement of every war ; or if, by the genius of any extraordinary commander, as by that of Marlborough, unlooked-for success is achieved in the outset, the nation is unable to follow it up ; the very magnitude of the success prevents its continuance, the war languishes for want of the requisite support. The enemy gets time to recover from his consternation ; his danger stimulates him to greater exertions ; and many long years of warfare, deeply chequered with disaster, and attended with enormous expense, are required to obviate the effects of previous undue pacific reduction.

3.
Causes of
this singular
peculiarity.

The cause of this singular peculiarity, which has in every age exercised so important an influence on English affairs, is to be found in the combination in the national character of the democratic turn with *mercantile* interests and pursuits. If it be said that the prevalence of the democratic principle in Anglo-Saxon society is the cause of this peculiarity, and that popular bodies are invariably governed by present impressions, and incapable of foresight, we have the truth, but not the whole truth. The examples of the all-conquering Republic of Rome in ancient times, of the warlike cantons of Switzerland or the terrible French democracy in modern, of the devouring American confederacy in our own days, may convince us that democratic

societies, in certain circumstances, are the most permanently warlike of all states, and beyond all others dangerous, if their power is considerable, to all the countries in their vicinity. The true principle which explains the opposite effects of democracy in ruining some states and exalting others, in depriving some of all the fruit of their conquests, and causing others to advance in a steady career of aggressive aggrandisement, is to be found in the consideration of the invariable influence, in all circumstances, of *self interest* on the great majority of men in every rank, and under all varieties of human institutions. When the national spirit is warlike, and *general* advantage may be anticipated from the constant recurrence to hostilities, the Government is almost always secure of a cordial concurrence on the part of the majority in all measures, how costly soever, likely to secure success, and with it plunder, conquest, and rapine, on the first breaking out of war; and the *multis utile bellum* becomes the most popular of all objects. But if the national disposition is pacific—and it is to the paths of industry or the pursuits of commerce that the majority look for the means of aggrandisement—no consideration of public advantage will induce them to submit to present burdens, either to avert future disaster or follow up present success. And the working of these opposite principles may be seen even in the annals of England itself; for while in Europe, where their territory was limited, and commerce was the great source of individual advantage, nearly the whole fruit of victory has been constantly lost by subsequent parsimony; in India, where the case was the reverse, and the spoils of a conquered territory held out the most brilliant prospects to individual ambition,

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the progress of British power has been unbroken, and a dominion has been acquired, equalled only by that formerly won by the ancient conquerors of the world.

4.
Bitter sense
which Marl-
borough en-
tertained of
this parsimo-
nious
disposition.

How bitterly Marlborough felt this want of support, on the part of the cabinets both of London and Vienna, which prevented him from following up the victory of Blenheim with the decisive operations against France which he would otherwise have undoubtedly commenced, is proved by various parts of his correspondence. On the 16th of December 1704, he wrote to Mr Secretary Harley—"I am sorry to see nothing has been offered yet, *nor any care taken by Parliament for recruiting the army.* I mean chiefly the foot. It is of that consequence for an early campaign that without it *we may run the hazard of losing, in a great measure, the fruits of the last*; and, therefore, I pray leave to recommend it to you to advise with your friends, if any proper method can be thought of, that may be laid before the House immediately, without waiting my arrival." * Nor was the cabinet of Vienna, notwithstanding the imminent danger they had recently run, more active in making the necessary efforts to repair the losses of the campaign. "You cannot," says Marlborough, "say more to us of the *supine negligence of the Court of Vienna*, with reference to your affairs, *than we are sensible of everywhere else*; and certainly if the Duke of Savoy's good conduct and bravery at Verue had not reduced the French to a very low ebb, the game must have been over before any help could come to you."† It is ever thus, especially with states such as Great Britain, in which the democratic element is so powerful as to

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley*, 16th Dec. 1704.—*Despatches*, i. 556.

† *Marlborough to Mr Hill at Turin*, 6th Feb. 1705.—*Despatches*, i. 591.

imprint upon the measures of government that disregard of the future, and aversion to present efforts or burdens, which invariably characterises the mass of mankind. If Marlborough had been adequately supported and strengthened after the decisive blow struck at Blenheim—that is, if the governments of Vienna and London, with that of the Hague, had by a great and timely effort doubled his effective force when the French were broken and disheartened by defeat—he would have marched to Paris in the next campaign, and dictated peace to the *Grand Monarque* in his gorgeous halls of Versailles. It was short-sighted economy which entailed upon the Allied nations the costs and burdens of the next ten years of the War of the Succession, as it did the still greater costs and burdens of the Revolutionary contest, after the still more decisive successes of the Allies in the summer of 1793, when the iron frontier of the Netherlands had been entirely broken through, and their advanced posts, without any force to oppose them, were within a hundred and sixty miles of Paris.

This parsimony of the Allied governments, and their invincible repugnance to the efforts and sacrifices which could alone bring, and certainly would have brought, the contest to an early and glorious issue, is the cause of the subsequent conversion of the war into one of blockades and sieges, and of its being transferred to Flanders, where its progress was necessarily slow, and its cost enormous, from the vast number of strongholds which required to be reduced at every stage of the Allied advance. It was said at the time, that, in attacking Flanders in that quarter, Marlborough took the bull by the horns; that France on the side of the Rhine was far more vulnerable, and that the war was fixed in Flanders

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5.
Reasons for
converting
the war into
one of
sieges, and
placing its
seat in
Flanders.

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for the purpose of augmenting the profits of the generals employed, by protracting it. Subsequent writers, not reflecting on the difference of the circumstances, have observed the successful issue of the invasions of France from Switzerland and the Upper Rhine in 1814, and Flanders and the Lower Rhine in 1815, and concluded that a similar result would have attended a like bold invasion under Marlborough and Eugene. There never was a greater mistake. The great object of the war was to wrest Flanders from France. While the lily standard floated on Brussels and Antwerp, the United Provinces were constantly in danger of being swallowed up; and there was no security for the independence of England, Holland, or any of the German states. If Marlborough and Eugene had had two hundred thousand effective men at their disposal, as Wellington and Blücher had in 1815, or three hundred thousand, as Schwarzenberg and Blücher had in 1814, and a hundred thousand only in their front, they might doubtless have left half their force behind them to blockade the fortresses, and with the other half marched direct to Paris. But as they never had more than eighty thousand on their muster-rolls, and could not bring more than sixty or seventy thousand effective men into the field, this bold and decisive course was impossible. The French army in their front was rarely inferior to theirs, often superior; and how was it possible, in these circumstances, to venture on the perilous course of pushing on into the heart of the enemy's territory, leaving the frontier fortresses yet unsubdued in their rear?

The disastrous issue of the Blenheim campaign to the French, even when supported by the friendly arms and all the fortresses of Bavaria, in the preceding year, had

shown what was the danger of such a course. The still more calamitous issue of the Moscow campaign to the army of Napoleon, demonstrated that even the greatest military talents, and most enormous accumulation of military force, afford no security against the incalculable danger of an undue advance beyond the base of military operations. The greatest generals of the last age, fruitful beyond all others in military talent, have acted on those principles, whenever they had not an overwhelming superiority of forces at their command. Wellington never invaded Spain till he was master of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos ; nor France till he had subdued San Sebastian and Pampeluna. The first use which Napoleon made of his victories at Montenotte and Dego was to compel the Court of Turin to surrender all their fortresses in Piedmont ; of the victory of Marengo, to force the Imperialists to abandon the whole strongholds of Lombardy as far as the Adige. The possession of the single fortress of Mantua, in 1796, enabled the Austrians to arrest the course of Napoleon's victories, and gain time to assemble four different armies for the defence of the monarchy. The case of half a million of men, flushed by victory, and led by able and experienced leaders, assailing a single state, as they did in 1814 and 1815, is the exception, not the rule.

Circumstances, therefore, of paramount importance and irresistible force, compelled Marlborough to fix the war in Flanders, and convert it into one of sieges and blockades. In entering upon such a system of hostility—sure, and comparatively free from risk, but slow, and extremely costly—the Alliance ran the greatest risk of being shipwrecked, in consequence of the numerous discords, jealousies, and separate interests, which, in the case

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6.
Examples
of the same
necessity
being felt in
subsequent
times.

7.
Extraordi-
nary talent
of Marl-
borough for
keeping to-
gether the
Alliance.

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of almost every coalition recorded in history, have proved fatal to a great confederacy, if it does not obtain decisive success at the outset, before these seeds of division have had time to come to maturity. With what admirable skill and incomparable address Marlborough kept together the unwieldy Alliance will hereafter appear. Never was a man so qualified by nature for such a task. He was courtesy and grace personified. It was a common saying at the time, that neither man nor woman could resist him. And he had need of all these conciliatory qualities, and of his whole extraordinary grace and suavity of manner; for never was a commander, both abroad and at home, exposed throughout to so many and such serious difficulties, or so imperiously called on, at all times, to disarm domestic hostility, or invigorate foreign apathy, alike by unbroken success and unwearied address. It was hard to say whether his difficulties were greatest from the eclat of his triumphs, or from the disappointments consequent on the jealousies which prevented his taking advantage of them.

8.
Extraordi-
nary domes-
tic jealousy
to which he
was ex-
posed.

While intent only on his multifarious duties, as at once the commander-in-chief of the army and the head of the confederacy, Marlborough was assailed by the most inveterate hostility at home, which appeared only to increase with every victory which he gained. The usual attendants on unexpected greatness—envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness—were fast accumulating in his rear. The jealousy with which he was regarded was unbounded, and, if we had not seen at one time a similar hostility manifested against the Marlborough of our days, would seem incredible. Probably no man ever rose from private life to greatness, either in war, politics, or literature, without experiencing more or less of this envenomed

feeling, which no suavity or unobtrusiveness of manner can obviate ; for these qualities, by increasing the esteem of the estimable, only augment the jealousy of the malevolent. Marlborough, not despite, but in consequence of his very greatness, became such an object of hostility to the Tories that, as he himself said, "life had become a burden to him ;" and his great object was to obtain the Queen's permission to retire into private life, at the time when his enemies asserted he was anxious only to prolong the war for advantage to himself.^{1*}

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¹ Coxe, ii. 62-64. Marlborough to Duchess, Nov. 23, 1704. Coxe, ii. 62.

This jealousy, the invariable attendant on self-created greatness, was much aggravated in Marlborough's case by the dark stain on his earlier career. Men were exasperated at seeing him exalted to the highest pitch of worldly greatness, in consequence of the very change which seemed to them, and not without reason, as the extremity of worldly baseness. These feelings burst forth with peculiar vehemence during the march of the Allied army into Germany. The Tories complained that the troops were led on a distant and perilous expedition, and left exposed in the midst of their enemies; and that the general had exceeded his instructions, for his own private emolument. Threats were thrown out that, if

9.
Extraordinary jealousy of Marlborough.

* "Were the affairs of the Queen and Europe in such a condition that one might sleep quietly and safely in his own home, I had much rather that any one were at the head of affairs than myself; for parties are grown so very unreasonable that one ought not to expect any other than hardships, though without faults, when success is not with us."—*Marlborough to the Duchess, Cassel, Nov. 23, 1704*; COXE, ii. 62. "By my letters from England, I find that zeal and success is only capable of protecting me from the malice of villainous faction; so that, if it were not for the great obligation which I owe to the Queen, *nothing should persuade me ever more to stir out of England*. We have news here that Landau and Traerbach are taken; so that, thanks be to God, this campaign is ended to the greatest advantage to the Allies that has been for a long time. I long extremely to be with you and the children, so that you may be sure I shall lose no time when the wind is fair."—*Marlborough to the Duchess, Hanover, Dec. 2, 1704*; COXE, ii. 63.

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unsuccessful, it should bring his head to the block. The storming of the Schellenberg first broke in upon these pleasing illusions, and the victory of Blenheim dashed them to pieces. But though stunned, his enemies were not subdued ; and they contrived, from his very triumphs, to extract materials for fresh difficulties to throw in the hero's way. Though shamed into silence, for a time, by the roar of cannon, the glare of illuminations, and " the electric shock of a nation's gratitude," yet they ere long recovered their spirits, and turned all that had been done to the Duke's disadvantage. One set represented the victory gained as so decisive that it was high time now that the wars were ended, and the people allowed, in peace and quiet, to enjoy the fruit of their triumphs. Another—and they were the more numerous—diminished the success which had been gained, magnified the resources and perseverance of the enemy, and dwelt on the folly of continuing any longer a contest with a hydra which only became the more formidable after every wound which it received.* A third body—and they were the most numerous of all, and met with the most willing auditors—took refuge from public achievement in private scandal, and circulated the most malignant falsehoods about the Duke's thirst for money, and his profligate prolongation of the war for his own advantage. In one particular alone they all concurred, and that was, in hatred at the object of their hostility, and total disregard of truth, in the desire to injure him.¹

¹ Coxe, i.
41-44.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
41-72.
Hist. Mil.
v. 4.

* " The people you mention (the Tories) generally lessen the victory ; and, what is more strange to me, they will hardly ever believe any news that lessens France, but swallow up any to its advantage. One of these said not long ago, it was true a great many men were killed or taken, but that to the French king was no more than to take a bucket of water out of a river ; and they seemed so possessed with what his flatterers say of his greatness, *that*

The same circumstance of necessity imprinted a peculiar character upon the generalship of Marlborough, as it has subsequently done on that of Wellington, and must ever do on the commander who is to head the forces of a great confederacy, especially if popular states enter into its composition. Caution and prudence, in such a situation, are not only important, but indispensable. The jealousies of cabinets are such, their interests are so frequently at variance, that nothing can keep the alliance together for any length of time, but either an unbroken career of success, or the presence of some universally felt and overwhelming danger. Such is the impatience of disaster or taxation, and such the fickleness of disposition in the people of every country, that they can never be brought to carry on a contest for any considerable time, not attended with immediate profit to themselves, if danger is not evident from its cessation, or their imaginations are not excited by a constant series of triumphs. Both these difficulties existed in the case of Marlborough, for he was the general of a free state, which, unless in the excitement of victory, is constantly impatient of taxation, and the leader of the forces of an Alliance which it required all his address, and all the terrors of Louis XIV., to hinder every year from falling to pieces, from the jealousies and separate views of its members. With him, therefore, a prudent line of conduct was not only advisable, but indispensable. A single defeat would overturn the ministry in England,

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10.

Caution
which the
same cause
imprinted
on Marlbo-
rough's
military
conduct.

they almost deem him omnipotent."—*Mr Barnett to Marlborough*, Aug. 5, 1704; COXE, ii. 42. "Sir Edward Seymour declared, in the language of a sportsman, that he and his friends would pounce upon the adventurous commander on his return as hounds pounce on a hare; and threats were even thrown out that his rash expedition, if unsuccessful, would probably bring his head to the block."—COXE, ii. 41.

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and dissolve the Alliance. Unbroken success was to him, as it afterwards was to Wellington, the condition of existence : it was by its influence alone that the contest could be maintained ; and the event proved that even this condition, which he constantly implemented, could not in the end insure a hearty continuance of it. And from this very success arose a new set of dangers ; for it took away the stimulus of fear, and brought into activity the usual selfishness of mankind, which leads every one to strive to throw the burden of efforts for the common cause on his neighbour.

11.

Strange fetters which the Alliance imposed on his conduct of the war.

A striking proof of the action of these principles of weakness in the Alliance, of which he was the head, occurred in the very next campaign. It might have been expected that, after the march into Bavaria had demonstrated the military genius of the Duke of Marlborough, and the battle of Blenheim had in so decisive a manner broken the enemy's power, the principal direction of military affairs would have been intrusted to that consummate commander ; and that the Allied cabinets, without presuming to interfere in the management of the campaigns, would have turned all their efforts to place at his disposal forces adequate to carry into execution the mighty designs which he meditated, and had shown himself so well qualified to carry into execution. It was quite the reverse. The Allied cabinets did nothing. They did worse than nothing—they interfered only to do mischief. Their principal object after this appeared to be to cramp the efforts of this great general, to overrule his bold designs, to tie down his aspiring genius. Each looked only to his own separate objects, and nothing could make them see that these were to be gained only by promoting the general objects of the Alliance.

Relieved from the danger of instant subjugation by the victory of Blenheim, and the retreat of the French army across the Rhine, the German powers relapsed into their usual state of supineness, lukewarmness, and indifference. The age and infirmities of the Emperor Leopold, who was in the most debilitated state, and the dangers of the Hungarian insurrection, paralysed all the efforts of the cabinet of Vienna. No efforts of Marlborough could induce the Dutch either to enlarge their contingent, or even to render that already in the field fit for active service. The English force was not half of what the national strength was capable of sending forth. Parliament would not hear of anything like an adequate expenditure. Thus the golden opportunity, never likely to be regained, of profiting by the consternation of the enemy after the battle of Blenheim, and their weakness after forty thousand of their best troops had been lost to their armies, was allowed to pass away ; and the war was permitted to dwindle into one of posts and sieges, when, by a vigorous effort, it might have been concluded in the next campaign.^{1*}

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1705.

¹ Marlborough to M. Pestors, May 31, 1705. Desp. ii. 60, 61.

It was not thus with the French. The same causes which had loosened the efforts of the confederates had inspired unwonted vigour into their councils. The Rhine was crossed by the Allies ; the French armies

^{12.} Vigorous efforts of the French Government.

* "C'est le retardement de toutes les troupes Allemandes qui dérangent nos affaires. Je ne saurais mieux vous expliquer la situation où nous sommes qu'en vous envoyant les deux lettres ci-jointes—l'une que je viens de recevoir du Prince de Bade, et l'autre la réponse que je lui fais. En vérité, notre état est plus à plaindre que vous ne croyez ; mais je vous prie que cela n'aille pas outre. *Nous perdons la plus belle occasion du monde—manque des troupes qui devaient être ici il y a déjà longtemps.* Pour le reste de l'artillerie Hollandaise, et les provisions qui peuvent arriver de Mayence, vous les arrêterez, s'il vous plaît, pour quelques jours, jusques à ce que je vous en écrive."—*Marlborough* à M. Pestors, Treves, 31 Mai, 1705 ; *Despatches*, ii. 60-1.

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had been hurled with disgrace out of Germany ; the territory of the Grand Monarque was threatened both from the side of Alsace and Flanders ; and a formidable insurrection in the Cevennes distracted the force and threatened the peace of the kingdom. But against all these evils Louis made head. Never had the superior vigour and perseverance of the leaders of a monarchy over those of a confederacy been more clearly evinced. Marshal Villars had been employed, in the close of the preceding year, in appeasing the insurrection in the Cevennes, and his measures were at once so vigorous and conciliatory that before the end of the following winter the disturbances were entirely at an end. In consequence of this, the forces employed in that quarter became disposable ; and by this means, and the immense efforts made by the government over the whole kingdom, the armies on the frontier were so considerably augmented that Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria took the field in the Low Countries at the head of seventy-five thousand men, while Marshal Marsin, on the Upper Rhine, covered Alsace with thirty thousand. Those armies were much larger than any which the Allies could bring against them ; for although it had been calculated that Marlborough was to be at the head of ninety thousand men on the Moselle on the 1st May, yet, from the dilatory conduct of the States-General and the German princes, in the beginning of June there were scarcely thirty thousand men collected round his standards, all English, or in the pay of Great Britain ; and in Flanders, and on the Upper Rhine, the enemy's relative superiority was still greater.¹

The plan of the campaign of 1705, based on the supposition that these great forces were to be at his disposal, concerted between him and Prince Eugene, was

¹ Hist. Mil.
v. 5-7. Hist.
de Marl. ii.
67-74.
Coxe, ii.
110-111.

in the highest degree bold and decisive. It was fixed that, early in spring, ninety thousand men should be assembled in the country between the Moselle and the Saar, and, after establishing their magazines and base of operations at Treves and Traerbach, they should penetrate, in two columns, into Lorraine; that the column under Marlborough in person should advance along the course of the Moselle, and the other, under the Margrave of Baden, by the valley of the Saar, and that Saar-Louis should be invested before the French army had time to take the field. In this way the whole fortresses of Flanders would be avoided, and the war, carried into the enemy's territory, would assail France on the side where her iron barrier was most easily pierced through. But the slowness of the Dutch and backwardness of the Germans rendered this well-conceived plan abortive, and doomed the English general, for the whole of a campaign which promised such important advantages, to little else but difficulty, delay, and vexation. Marlborough's enthusiasm, great as it was, nearly sank under the repeated disappointments which he experienced at this juncture; and, guarded as he was, his chagrin exhaled in several bitter complaints in his confidential correspondence. The dilatory conduct—to give it no worse name—of the Prince of Baden in particular excited his decided animadversion, insomuch that he wrote to the Emperor on the subject. But it was all in vain. Nothing could overcome the proverbial slowness of the Germans; and so tardy were their movements that even in the end of May, a fortnight after Marlborough had joined the army, a third of the foot-soldiers, and more than half the horse, which they were to have furnished, were still awanting. This

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13.

Bold plan
of Marlbo-
rough and
Eugene for
the inva-
sion of
France.

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1705.

¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, May 11, 1705. Marlborough to Count Wroteslau, June 8, 1705. Desp. ii. 85.

rendered offensive operations at present hopeless ; and Marlborough had the mortification of beholding the enemy's army daily increasing, and their position rendered stronger, while his own received no augmentation. But, like a true patriot and man of perseverance, he did not give way to despair when he found nearly all that had been promised him wanting ; but, perceiving the greater designs impracticable, from the want of all the means by which they could be carried into execution, prepared to make the most of the insufficient force which alone was at his disposal.¹*

14.
Commencement of operations early in June on the Moselle, June 3.

At length, some of the German reinforcements having arrived, Marlborough, on the 3d of June, though still greatly inferior to the enemy, commenced operations. Such was the terror inspired by his name, and the tried valour of the English troops, that Villars—although he had fifty-five thousand, and they only forty-two thousand as yet—remained on the defensive, and soon retreated. Without firing a shot, he evacuated a strong woody country, which was occupied by Marlborough. Such was the strength of this position that Villars had said a few days before to his generals, “ Here is a fine place

* “ I am very much disappointed by the very little number of troops they can from hence send to the Moselle. All that Prince Louis of Baden will promise is twenty battalions and forty squadrons ; but even of these I am only promised twelve battalions and twenty-eight squadrons, which are to be at Treves by the 10th of next month. This is so great a disappointment that I have written very pressing to the Emperor upon it.”—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Rastadt, May 11/22, 1705 ; COXE, ii. 104. “ The army of Prince Louis is in so miserable a condition that he could not spare more than twelve battalions and twenty-eight squadrons by the 10th or 12th June. The troops of Prussia cannot be here much sooner, and the seven thousand Palatines in the English and Dutch pay are to be here by the 6th. By all this you will see we want a third of our foot, and almost half our horse, which makes it impossible for me as yet to march.”—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, May 16 27, 1705 ; COXE, ii. 108, 109. Even so late as the 8th June, Marlborough wrote—“ J'ai d'abord pris poste dans ce camp, où je me trouve à portée

to meet an enemy: the best ground in the world to fight on a good opportunity." He evacuated it, however, and retired to a still stronger defensive position, extending from Haute Sirk on the right, to the Nevelle on the left, and communicating in the rear with Luxembourg, Thionville, and Saar-Louis. This position was so well chosen that it was hopeless to attempt to force it without heavy cannon; and Marlborough's had not yet arrived, from the failure of the German princes to furnish the draught-horses they had promised. For nine weary days he remained in front of the French position, counting the hours till the guns and reinforcements came up; but such was the tardiness of the German powers, and the universal inefficiency of the inferior princes and potentates, that they never made their appearance. The English general was still anxiously awaiting the promised supplies, without which it was impossible to hazard an attack, when intelligence arrived from the right of so alarming a character as at once changed the theatre of operations, and fixed him for the remainder of the campaign in the plains of Flanders.^{1*}

CHAP.
IV.
1705.

¹ Coxe, ii.
113-118.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
80-83.
Rousset,
ii. 125.

It was the rapid progress which Marshal Villeroi and

d'entreprendre la siège de Saar-Louis, si les troupes qui devaient avoir été ici il y a quelques jours n'avaient joint. Cependant je n'ai pas jusques ici un seul homme qui ne soit à la solde de l'Angleterre ou de la Hollande. Les troupes de Bade ne peuvent arriver avant le 21 au plutôt; quelques-uns des Prussiens sont encore plus en arrière; et pour les trois mille chevaux que les princes voisins devaient nous fournir, pour mener l'artillerie et les munitions, et sans quoi il nous sera impossible d'agir, je n'en ai aucune nouvelle, nonobstant toutes mes instances. J'ai grand peur même qu'il n'y ait à l'heure même que je vous écris celle-ci, des résolutions en chemin de la Haye, qui détruiront entièrement tous nos projets de ce côté-ci. Cette situation me donne tant d'inquiétude, que je ne saurais me dispenser de vous prier d'en vouloir faire part à sa Majesté Impériale."—*Marlborough au Comte de Wroteslau*, Elft, 8 Juin, 1705. *Despatches*, ii. 85.

* "Tous les mouvemens de Marlborough tendèrent à se rendre maître de Thionville, et même de Luxembourg. Le Prince de Bade, qui commandoit

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1705.

15.

Successes of
Villeroi
over the
Allies in
Flanders.

the Elector of Bavaria, at the head of sixty thousand men, were making in the heart of the Low Countries, which rendered this change necessary. General Overkirk was there intrusted with the army intended to cover Holland ; but it was greatly inferior to the enemy in point of numerical amount, and still more so in the quality and composition of the troops of which it was made up. Aware of his superiority, and of the timid character of the government which was principally interested in that army, Villeroi pushed his advantages to the utmost. He advanced rapidly upon the Meuse, carried by assault the fortress of Huys, and, marching upon Liege, occupied the town without much resistance, and laid siege to the citadel. Overkirk, cautiously remaining within his lines before Maestricht, was unable even to keep the field. Marlborough was well aware of this danger ; but he had calculated, with reason, upon being able to obviate it by making such progress on the Moselle as would have compelled the French, instead of making offensive movements on the Meuse, to detach troops from thence to reinforce Villars, and cover Thionville and Luxembourg. But as the failure of the German princes to complete their contingents rendered this hope abortive, real danger threatened the United Provinces.*

L'armée de l'Empire, lui avait promis de le joindre pour l'exécution d'un si beau projet ; les cercles, princes, et états voisins avaient promis de fournir à temps les munitions et l'artillerie nécessaire : mais personne ne tint parole sans que l'on peut pénétrer la raison. Au moment où l'on voulut l'exécuter, rien, ne se trouva pert, et dans un grand conseil de guerre, qui dura trois jours, personne ne voulut seconder le général Anglais, qui fut ainsi obligé d'abandonner le dessein le mieux concerté, et reconduire son armée en Flandre, où les députés des Etats-Généraux le rappeloient apres quelques semaines, pour arrêter des progrès que pouvaient être fatale à leur republique.—*ROUSSET*, ii. 125.

* “The French are attacking Huys, and will soon be before Liege. These movements have spread such a panic in Holland that I am apprehensive lest

The utmost alarm seized upon all classes. They already in imagination saw Louis XIV. a second time at the gates of Amsterdam. Courier after courier was despatched to Marlborough soliciting relief in the most urgent terms ; and it was hinted that, if effectual protection were not immediately given, Holland would be under the necessity of negotiating for a separate peace. There was not a moment to be lost : the Dutch were now as hard pressed as the Austrians had been in the preceding year, and in greater alarm than the Emperor was before the battle of Blenheim. A cross-march like that into Bavaria could alone reinstate affairs. Without a moment's hesitation Marlborough took his determination.¹

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IV.
1705.

¹ Rousset,
ii. 129.
Coxe, ii.
119-121.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
83-85.

On the 17th June, without communicating his designs to any one, or even without saying a word of the alarming intelligence he had received, he ordered the whole army to be under arms at midnight, and setting out shortly after, he marched, without intermission, eighteen miles to the rear. Having thus gained a march upon the enemy, so as to avoid the risk of being pursued or harassed in his retreat, he left General d'Aubach with eleven battalions and twelve squadrons to cover the important magazines at Trêves and Saarbruck, with orders to defend them to the last extremity ; and

16.
Sudden
march of
Marlbo-
rough to
their relief.

the States should adopt resolutions that will mar our designs on this side, which must be attributed to the delay in the arrival of the German troops. Had they joined me in time, the enemy must have made a considerable detachment from the Netherland to this quarter."—*Marlborough to Prince Eugene*, June 11, 1705 ; COXE, ii. 119. "If I had known beforehand what I must endure by relying on the people of this country, no reasons would have induced me to have undertaken this campaign. I will, by the help of God, do my best, and then I must submit to what may happen. But it is impossible to be quiet and not complain, when there is all the probability imaginable of a glorious campaign, to see all put in doubt from the negligence of princes, whose interest it is to help us with all they have."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, June 16, 1705 ; COXE, ii. 121.

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1705.

himself, with the remainder of the army, about thirty thousand strong, marched rapidly in the direction of Maestricht. He was in hopes of being able, like the Consul Nero, in the memorable cross-march from Apulia to the Metaurus, in Roman story, to surprise the French with his own army united to that of Overkirk, before they were aware of his approach ; but in this he was disappointed. Villeroi got notice of his movement, and instantly raising the siege of the citadel of Liege, withdrew, though still superior in number to the united forces of the enemy, within the shelter of the lines he had prepared and fortified with great care on the Meuse. Marlborough, who had crossed that river near Viset, and effected his junction with Overkirk at Haneffe on the 2d July, instantly attacked Huys, which, invested on the 6th, surrendered on the 11th July. But the satisfaction derived from having thus arrested the progress of the enemy in Flanders, and wrested from him the only conquest of the campaign, soon received a bitter alloy. Like Frederick in his marvellous campaigns, and Napoleon in his later years, the successes he gained in person were often overbalanced by the disasters sustained through the blunders or treachery of his lieutenants.¹

¹ Coxe, ii.
120-123.
Mem. de
Villars, i.
336-375.
Hare's
Journal.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
85-87.
Rousset,
ii. 125.

17.
The disasters of the German troops in the circle of Trèves render the design abortive.

Hardly had Huys opened its gates, when advices were received that d'Aubach, instead of obeying his orders, and defending the magazines at Trèves and Saarbruck to the last extremity, had fled on the first appearance of a weak French detachment, and burnt the whole stores which it had cost so much time and money to collect. This was a severe blow to Marlborough, for it at once rendered impracticable the offensive movement into Lorraine, on which his heart was so set, and from which he had anticipated such important results.

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It was no longer possible to carry the war into the enemy's territory, or turn the whole fortresses of the enemy in Flanders. The tardiness of the German powers in the first instance, the terrors of the Dutch, and the misconduct of d'Aubach in the last, had caused that ably-conceived design entirely to miscarry.* Great was the mortification of the English general at this signal disappointment of his most warmly-cherished hopes; it even went so far that he had thoughts of resigning his command. It not only blasted all his projects, but gave such increased vigour to his enemies in England that he at one time had actually resolved to carry this intention into execution.† But he soon recovered his native vigour of mind, and instead of abandoning himself to despair, he set about, like the King of Prussia in after times, the preparation of a stroke which should reinstate his affairs by the terror with which it inspired the enemy, and the demonstration of inexhaustible resources it afforded in himself.¹

¹ Rousset, ii. 125.
Coxe, ii. 124-127.
Hist. de Marl. ii. 87-89.

* "Par ces contretemps nos projets de ce côté-ci sont évanouis, au moins pour le présent; et j'espère qu'Elle me fera la justice de croire que j'ai fait tout ce qui a dépendu de moi pour les faire réussir. Si je pouvais avoir l'honneur d'entretenir V. A. pour une seule heure, je lui dirai bien des choses par où Elle verrait combien je suis à plaindre. J'avais 94 escadrons et 72 bataillons, tous à la solde de l'Angleterre et de la Hollande; de sorte que, si on m'avait secondé, nous aurions eu une des plus glorieuses campagnes qu'on pouvait souhaiter. Après un tel traitement, V. A., je suis sûre, ne m'aurait pas blâmé si j'avais pris la résolution de ne jamais plus servir, comme je ne ferai pas aussi, je vous assure, après cette campagne, à moins que de pouvoir prendre des mesures avec l'Empereur sur lesquelles je pourrais entièrement me fier."—*Marlborough à Eugene*, 21 Juin, 1705: *Despatches*, ii. 125.

† "They write to me from England that the tackers and all their friends are glad of the disappointments I meet with, saying, that if I had success this year like the last, the Constitution of England would be ruined. This vile enormous faction of theirs vexes me so much that I hope the Queen will, after this campaign, allow me to retire, and end my days in praying for her prosperity and making my peace with God."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, June 13/24, 1705; COXE, ii. 127.

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1705.

18.
Position
occupied by
Villeroi.

The position taken up by the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Villeroi, when Marlborough's cross-march forced them to defensive measures, was so strong that it was regarded as impregnable ; and in truth it was so to a front attack. With its right resting on Marché-aux-Dames, on the Meuse, it passed by Gerbise to Waseigne, on the Me-haigne, and from thence stretching to the Little Gheet, followed its left bank to Leau ; from Leau it descended the course of the Great Gheet to its junction with the Demer, and wound along the latter stream as far as Aerschot, from whence a series of field-works connected it with the strong and important fortress of Antwerp. This line was long, and of course liable to be broken through at various points ; but such was the skill with which every vulnerable part had been strengthened and fortified, by the French engineers, that it was no easy matter to say where an impression could be made. Wherever a marsh or a stream intervened, the most skilful use had been made of it ; while forts and redoubts, plentifully mounted with heavy cannon, both commanded all the approaches to the lines, and formed so many *points d'appui* to the defenders in case of disaster. Such a position, defended by 70,000 men, directed by able generals, might well be deemed impregnable. Villeroi had 119 battalions and 160 squadrons—the largest army the French had shown in the field during the war. Success appeared hopeless ; but Marlborough, with an inferior force, resolved to attempt it. He was at the head of 72 battalions and 94 squadrons, mustering 36,000 foot and 14,000 horse ; and with them he determined to assail the enemy in their strong position. In doing so, however, he had difficulties more formidable to overcome than even the resistance of the enemy in front : the timidity of the

authorities at the Hague, and the nervousness under responsibility of the generals of the United Provinces, were more to be dreaded than Villeroi's redoubts. It required all the consummate address of the English general, aided by the able co-operation of General Overkirk, to obtain liberty from the Dutch authorities to engage in any offensive undertaking. At length, however, after infinite difficulty, a council of war at headquarters agreed to support any measure which might be deemed advisable; and Marlborough instantly set about putting his design in execution. In doing so, however, he was obliged to exert his wonted secrecy and address. He communicated his design to Overkirk alone, on whose patriotism and fidelity, as well as courage and skill, he could entirely rely; and that officer willingly engaged to take, and actually took, the whole Dutch force with him on the expedition on which he was to be sent, in order to prevent its generals from thwarting the design in contemplation.¹

CHAP.
IV.
1705.

¹ Coxe, ii.
135-137.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
91-96.
Rousset,
ii. 126.

The better to conceal the real point of attack, he gave out that a march to the Moselle was to be immediately undertaken; and, to give a colour to the report, the corps which had been employed in the siege of Huys was not brought forward to the front. At the same time Overkirk with the whole Dutch troops was detached to the Allied left, across the Meuse, towards Bourdine, and Marlborough followed with a considerable force, ostensibly to support him. So completely was Villeroi imposed upon, that he drew large reinforcements from the centre to his extreme right; and soon forty thousand men were grouped round the sources of the Little Gheet in that quarter. By this means the middle of his line was seriously weakened; and Marl-

19.
His able
plan to
overreach
the enemy.

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July 17.

borough instantly assembled, with every imaginable precaution to avoid discovery, all his disposable forces to attack that, now the most vulnerable part of the lines. The corps hitherto stationed on the Meuse was silently brought up to the front; Marlborough put himself at the head of his own English and German troops, whom he had carried with him from the Moselle; and at eight at night, on the 17th July, the whole began to march, all profoundly ignorant of the service on which they were to be engaged. Each trooper was ordered to carry a truss of hay at his saddle-bow, as if a long march was in contemplation. At the same instant on which the columns under Marlborough's orders commenced their march, Overkirk repassed the Mehaigne on the left, and, concealed by darkness, fell into the general line of the advance of the Allied troops. No fascines or gabions had been brought along to fill up the ditch, for fear of exciting alarm in the lines. The trusses of hay alone were trusted to for that purpose, as equally effectual, and less likely to awaken suspicion.¹

¹ Coxe, ii. 137, 138. Hist. de Marl., ii. 95, 96. Hist. Mil. iv. 51-53.

20.

Entire success of the attack on Villeroi's lines. July 17.

At four in the morning, the heads of the columns, wholly unperceived, were in front of the French works, and, covered by a thick fog, traversed the morass which covered them, stormed Neerwinden and Neer-Hespen, carried the village and bridge of Elixheim and the castle of Wange, passed the Little Gheet despite its steep banks, and, rushing forward with a swift pace, crossed the ditch on the trusses of hay, and in three massy columns scaled the rampart, and broke into the enemy's works. Hitherto entire success had attended this admirably planned attack; but the alarm was now given: a fresh corps of fifteen thousand men, including thirty squadrons of

horse, chiefly Bavarians, under M. d'Allegre, hastily assembled, and a heavy fire was opened upon the Allies, now distinctly visible in the morning light, from a commanding battery. Upon this, Marlborough put himself at the head of Lumley's English horse, and, charging vigorously, succeeded, though not till he had sustained one repulse, in breaking through the line thus hastily formed. The Bavarian horse were enveloped, and, but for the extreme firmness displayed by the French infantry in the line, would infallibly have been made prisoners. In this charge the Duke narrowly escaped with his life, in a personal conflict with a Bavarian officer. The Allies now crowded in in great numbers, and the French, panic-struck, fled on all sides, abandoning the whole centre of their intrenchments to the bold assailants. Villeroi, who had become aware, from the retreat of Overkirk in his front, that some attack was in contemplation, but was ignorant where the tempest was to fall, remained all night under arms. At length, attracted by the heavy fire, he approached the scene of action in the centre, only in time to see that the position was broken through, and the lines no longer tenable. He drew off his whole troops accordingly, and fell back across the Great Gheet towards the Dyle.¹

CHAP.
IV.
1705.

¹ Hist. Mil.
iv. 53, 54.
Coxe, ii.
138-140.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
96-99.
Rousset,
ii. 126.

It was part of the design of the Duke to have intercepted the line of retreat of the French, and prevented them from reaching the Dyle, to which they were tending; but such was the obstinacy and slowness of the Dutch generals that nothing could persuade them to make any further exertion, and, in defiance of the orders and remonstrances alike of Marlborough and Overkirk, they pitched their tents and refused to take any part in the pursuit. The consequence was, that Villeroi

21.
Obstinacy
and back-
wardness of
the Dutch
prevent a
complete
victory.

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1705.

collected his scattered forces, crossed the Dyle in haste, over which he had prudently prepared two bridges, which were broken down as soon as his troops had passed, and took up new ground, about eighteen miles in the rear, with his left sheltered by the cannon of Louvain. But, though the disobedience and obstinacy of the Dutch thus intercepted Marlborough in the career of victory, and rendered his success much less complete than it otherwise would have been, a mighty blow had yet been struck, reflecting the highest credit on the skill and resolution of the English general. The famous lines, on which the French had been labouring for months, had been broken through and carried during a nocturnal conflict of a few hours; they had lost all their redoubts, and the cannon, eighteen in number, with which they were armed; M. d'Allegré, with twelve hundred prisoners and seven standards, had been taken; and the army which lately besieged Liege and threatened Maestricht was now driven back, defeated and discouraged, to seek refuge under the cannon of Louvain. The impression produced over Europe by this great achievement, accordingly, was very great, for it demonstrated the futility of the boasted French method of defence; and in a medal struck off for the occasion it was compared to the battle of Blenheim.¹

¹ Hist. Mil.
iv. 54, 55.
Coxe, ii.
146-149.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
104-106.

²²
The Dutch
deputies
continue
their oppo-
sition.

Overkirk, who had so ably co-operated with Marlborough in this glorious victory, had the magnanimity as well as candour, in his despatch to the States-General, to ascribe the success which had been gained entirely to the skill and courage of the English general.* But the

* "It is a justice I owe to the Duke of Marlborough to state, that the honour of the enterprise, executed with so much skill and courage, is entirely due to him."—*Overkirk to States-General*, 19th July 1705; COXE, ii. 151.

other Dutch generals, who had interrupted his career of success, had the malignity to charge the consequences of their own misconduct on his head, and even carried their effrontery so far as to accuse him of supineness in not following up his success, and cutting off the enemy's retreat to the Dyle, when it was themselves who had refused to obey his orders to do so. Success in such an enterprise was extremely probable during the confusion of the enemy's retreat behind the Dyle, on the 18th, when the Dutch generals, by refusing to co-operate, had rendered it impossible : subsequent to that it could not be attempted. Rains of extraordinary severity fell from the 19th to the 23d July, which rendered all offensive operations impracticable, by flooding the meadows through which the advance required to be made, and gave Villeroi time, of which he ably availed himself, to strengthen his position covered by the Dyle to such a degree as to render it no longer assailable with any prospect of success. The precious moment, when the enemy might have been driven from it in the first tumult of success, had been lost.^{1*}

The subsequent success in the Flemish campaign by no means corresponded to its brilliant commencement. The jealousy of the Dutch ruined everything. This gave rise to recriminations and jealousies which rendered it impracticable, even for the great abilities and consummate address of Marlborough, to effect anything of importance with the heterogeneous array with

CHAP.
IV.
1705.

¹ Coxe, ii.
151-153.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
107-110.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 56-59.

23.
Which mars
all the sub-
sequent ope-
rations of
the cam-
paign.

* "The great rains we have had all Tuesday and Wednesday nights have drowned all the meadows by which we were to have marched to have gone across the Dyle. The French were then in such a consternation, that, if we could have marched yesterday morning, as was intended, I believe they could not have opposed our passage ; nor do I think they intend it. But most of our Dutch generals are of another opinion."—*Marlborough to Godolphin* ; COXE, ii. 152.

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the nominal command of which he was invested. The English general despatched his adjutant-general, Baron Hompesch, to represent to the States-General the impossibility of going on longer with such a divided responsibility ; but, though they listened to his representations, nothing could induce them to put their troops under the direct orders of the commander-in-chief. They still had “field deputies,” as they were called, who were invested with the entire direction of the Dutch forces ; and as they were civilians, wholly unacquainted with military affairs, they had recourse on every occasion to the same factious generals who already had done so much mischief to the common cause. In vain Marlborough repeatedly endeavoured, as he himself said, “to cheat them into victory,” by getting their consent to measures of which they did not see the bearing, calculated to achieve that object. Their timid jealous spirit interposed on every occasion to mar important operations, and the corps they commanded was too considerable to admit of these operations being undertaken without their co-operation. After nine days’ watching the enemy across the Dyle, Marlborough proposed to cross the river near Louvain, and attack their position ; the Dutch deputies interposed their negative, to Marlborough’s infinite mortification, and, in his own words, “it spoiled the whole campaign.”¹*

¹ Coxe, ii.
153, 154.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
113, 114.

Worn out with these delays, Marlborough at length resolved at all hazards to pass the river, trusting that

* “On Wednesday it was unanimously resolved we should pass the Dyle, but that afternoon there fell so much rain as rendered it impracticable ; but the fair weather this morning made me determine to attempt it. Upon this the deputies held a council with all the generals of Overkirk’s army, who have unanimously retracted their opinions, and declared the passage of the river too dangerous, which resolution, in my opinion, *will ruin the whole*

the Dutch, when they saw the conflict once seriously engaged, would not desert him. But in this he was mistaken. The deputies of the United Provinces not only failed to execute the part assigned them in the combined enterprise, but sent information of his designs to the enemy. The consequence was, Villeroi was on his guard. All the Duke's demonstrations could not draw his attention from his left, where the real attack was intended; but nevertheless he pushed on the English and Germans under his orders, who forced the passage opposite to them in the most gallant style. At Corbeek, five hundred grenadiers, forming the advanced guard of the Duke of Wirtemberg's corps, under cover of forty pieces of cannon, constructed a temporary bridge, and crossed the Dyle with very little opposition; and at Neer Ische, General Heukelom not only led over the whole of his foot, nine thousand strong, but drove three brigades of the enemy out of the village. But when the Duke ordered the Dutch generals to support these attacks, they refused to move their men. Schlangenberg, in particular, made himself very conspicuous by his obstinate and shameful opposition. The consequence was that this attack, as well planned and likely to succeed as the famous forcing of the lines a fortnight before, proved abortive; and Marlborough, burning with indignation, was obliged to recall his troops when on the high road to victory, and when the river had been crossed without the loss of a hundred men.

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1705.

24.
The Dutch
treacher-
ously de-
sert him.
July 30.

campaign. They have, at the same time, proposed to me to attack the French on their left; but I know they will let that fall also, as soon as they see the ground. It is very mortifying to meet *more obstruction from friends than from enemies*; but that is now the case with me: yet I dare not show my resentment for fear of alarming the Dutch."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, 29th July 1705; COXE, ii. 158.

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1705.

So general was the indignation at this shameful return on the part of the Dutch generals to Marlborough for all the services he had rendered to their country, that it drew forth the strongest expressions from one of his ablest but most determined opponents in after times. Lord Bolingbroke, whom he had shortly before introduced to office as secretary-at-war, wrote to him at this juncture :—" It was very melancholy to find the malice of Schlangenberg, the fears of Dopf, and the ignorance of the deputies, to mention no more, prevail so to disappoint your Grace, to their prejudice as well as ours. We hope the Dutch have agreed to what your Grace desires of them, without which the war becomes a jest to our enemies, *and can end in nothing but an ill peace, which is certain ruin to us.*"¹*

¹ Coxe, ii.
154-160.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 60, 61.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
114-116.

25.
Marlbo-
rough's ope-
rations on
the field of
Waterloo.

August 14.

Still the English general was not discouraged. His public spirit and patriotism prevailed over his just feelings of resentment. Finding it impossible to prevail on the Dutch deputies, who, in every sense, were so many viceroys over him, to agree to any attempt to force the passage of the Dyle, he resolved to turn it. For this purpose the army, previously provided with six days' bread for every man, and forage for the horses, was put in motion on the 14th August ; and, defiling to the left, he directed it in three columns towards the sources of that river. The march was rapid, as the Duke had information that strong reinforcements, detached from the army at Alsace, would join Villeroi on the 18th. The troops soon came to ground subsequently immortalised in English story. On the 16th they reached Genappe, where, on 17th June 1815, the Life Guards under Lord Anglesea defeated the French lancers ; on the day following the

* *Bolingbroke to Marlborough*, August 18, 1705 ; COXE, ii. 160.

enemy retired from the Dyle to a new position behind the Ische, their right resting on the forest of Soignies, their left covered by the Dyle. In this position they rested, covering Brussels, and the Allied headquarters were moved to Braine la Lende, directly in their front. On the 17th August a skirmish took place on the plain in front of WATERLOO; and the alarm being given, the Duke hastened to the spot, and rode over the field where Wellington and Napoleon contended a hundred and ten years afterwards. The French upon this retired into the forest of Soignies, and rested in rear of Waterloo for the night.^{1 *}

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IV.
1705.

¹ Coxe, ii.
162-164.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 68-70.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
119-121.

The slightest glance at the map must be sufficient to show that, by this cross-march to Genappe and Waterloo, Marlborough had gained an immense advantage over the enemy. *He had interposed between them and France.* He had relinquished for the time, it is true, his own base of operations, and was out of communication with his magazines; but he had provided for this by taking six days' provisions for the army with him; and he could now force the French either to fight or to abandon Brussels, and retire towards Antwerp—the Allies being between them and France. Still clinging to their fortified lines on the Dyle, and desirous of covering Brussels, they withdrew their centre behind the Ische, and had only occupied the wood of Soignies with their right wing; while the Allies covered all the open

26.
Immense
advantage
thus gained
by Marlbo-
rough, who
had turned
the French.

* “ Le lendemain, lorsqu'on vit que les ennemis s'approchaient de la forêt de Soignies, on renforça le corps de M. Grimaldi de neuf autres bataillons; on envoya en même tems à *Waterloo*, pour tenir la tête de la chaussée qui menait à Bruxelles, six escadrons de dragons, aux ordres du Sieur Jacob dit Pasteur, de sorte qu'il avait dans cette partie dix-huit escadrons et dix-huit bataillons en état d'empêcher qu'on ne s'approchât de Bruxelles. D'ailleurs, l'armée n'étoit éloignée de cette ville que de deux lieues et demie, et on y communiquait par la forêt de Soignies.”—*Hist. Mil.* iv. 68.

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1705.

country from Genappe to Frischermont and Braine la Leude, with their advanced posts pushed up to La Haye Sainte and Mont St Jean. The Allies now occupied the ground afterwards covered by Napoleon's army; the forest of Soignies and approaches to Brussels were guarded by the French. Incalculable were the results of a victory gained in such a position: it was by success gained over an army of half the size so placed that Napoleon, a century after, established his power in so surprising a manner at Marengo, and that Eugene overthrew the French power under the walls of Turin in the very same year. Fully aware of his advantage, Marlborough, on the 18th August, anxiously reconnoitred the ground; and, finding the front practicable for the passage of troops, moved up his men in three columns to the attack. The baggage was sent to Warre; the Allied columns traversed at right angles the line of march by which Blucher advanced to the support of Wellington on the 18th June 1815.

27.

Marlborough prepares to attack the French at Waterloo, August 18.

Had Marlborough's orders been executed, it is probable he would have gained a victory which, from the relative position of the two armies, could not but have been decisive; and possibly the 18th August, 1705, might have become as celebrated in history as the 18th June 1815. His columns traversed in safety the forest which lies between the Lahne and the Ische, and debouched into the plain formed by the latter river. Overkirk, to whom he showed the ground at Over-Ische which he had destined for the scene of attack, perfectly concurred in the expedience of it, and orders were given to bring the artillery forward to commence a cannonade. By the malice or negligence of Schlangenberg, however, who had again violated his express instructions, and per-

mitted the baggage to intermingle with the artillery-train, the guns had not arrived, and some hours were lost before they could be pushed up. During this interval, however, Marlborough was not idle: in person he advanced, at the head of a body of cavalry, and discovered four practicable points of attack—at Over-Ische, near Holberg, between these two villages, and at Neer-Ische. In his survey he approached so near the enemy that they directed their guns upon him. “These gentlemen,” observed he, smiling and pointing to a weak part of the line, “do not choose to have this spot too narrowly inspected.” At length, but not till noon, the guns were brought forward, and the troops being in line, Marlborough rode along the front to give his last orders. The English and Germans were in the highest spirits, anticipating certain victory from the relative position of the armies. Joy beamed from every countenance; the meanest soldier saw the immense advantage which had been gained—the French fighting with their faces to Paris, the Allies with theirs to Brussels.¹

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IV.
1705.

¹ Coxe, ii.
164, 165.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
120-122.
Hist. Mil.
iv. 73-75.

But again the Dutch deputies and generals interposed, alleging that the enemy was too strongly posted to be attacked with any prospect of success. “Gentlemen,” said Marlborough to the circle of generals which surrounded him, “I have reconnoitred the ground, and made dispositions for an attack. I am convinced that conscientiously, and as men of honour, we cannot now retire without an action. Should we neglect this opportunity, we must be responsible before God and man. You see the confusion which pervades the ranks of the enemy, and their embarrassment at our manœuvres. I leave you to judge whether we should attack to-day,

23.
But is again
thwarted by
the Dutch
deputies.

CHAP.
IV.
1705.

or wait till to-morrow. It is indeed late ; but you must consider that, by throwing up intrenchments during the night, the enemy will render their position far more difficult to force." A murmur of disapprobation was immediately heard among the Dutch generals, and Schlangenberg replied—"Since I have been led to this place, without any previous communication of the design, I will give no other opinion but that the passage at Over-Ische is impracticable. However, I am ready to obey the orders I may receive." "I am happy," said the Duke, "to have under my command an officer of your courage and skill; and I flatter myself that, in a situation that requires instant decision, you will start no difficulties." "Murder and massacre," replied Schlangenberg. Marlborough, upon this, offered him two English for every Dutch battalion; but this too the Dutchman refused, on the plea that he did not understand English. Upon this the Duke offered to give him German regiments; but even this was declined, upon the pretence that the attack would be too hazardous. Marlborough, upon this, turned to the deputies and said,—“I disclaim to send troops to dangers which I will not myself encounter. *I will lead them where the peril is most imminent.* I adjure you, gentlemen! for the love of God and your country, do not let us neglect so favourable an opportunity." But it was all in vain; and instead of acting, the Dutch deputies and generals spent three hours in debating, until night came on and it was too late to attempt anything. During this period of painful suspense, Marlborough was observed standing by in an agony of impatience. "Let us act," said he again and again, "and not deliberate; the enemy will have time to fortify themselves.¹ March, and victory is

¹ COXE, ii.
163-169.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
122-123.

secure." Nothing would do : the Dutch generals were immovable. Such was Marlborough's chagrin at this disappointment that he said, on retiring from the field, " I am at this moment *ten years* older than I was four days ago."

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IV.
1795.

Next day, as Marlborough had foreseen, the enemy had strengthened their position with field-works ; so that it was utterly hopeless to attempt getting the Dutch to agree to an attack which had then become hazardous, though it was not so the evening before. The case was now irremediable. The six days' bread which had been provided was on the point of being exhausted, and a protracted campaign without communication with the magazines was impracticable. With a heavy heart, therefore, the English general remeasured his steps by Wavre and Corbais to the ground he had left, took post between Bossut and Meldert on the banks of the Demer, and gave orders for destroying the lines of Leau, which he had carried with so much ability. His vexation was increased afterwards, by finding that the consternation of the French had been such on the 18th August, when he was so urgent to attack them, that they intended only to have made a show of resistance, to gain time for their baggage and heavy guns being removed to Brussels. To all appearance Marlborough, if he had not been so shamefully thwarted, would have signalised the forest of Soignies by a victory as decisive as that of Blenheim, and realised the triumphant entrance into Brussels which Napoleon anticipated from his attack on Wellington on the same ground a hundred and ten years afterwards.¹ Lord Aversham expressed no more than the truth when he said afterwards, in Parliament, in reference to these events—" We

^{29,}
Marlborough is
obliged to
forego his
advantages.

¹ Coxe, ii.
170, 171.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
123, 124.

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IV.

1705.

30.
Complaints
of the
Dutch
against
Marlbo-
rough.

had an opportunity of ending the war by a decisive blow, but the Dutch tied the Duke of Marlborough's hands, and would not permit him to take advantage of it."

Nothing further, of any moment, was done in this campaign, except capturing Leau and levelling the enemy's lines on the Gheet. Marlborough wrote a formal letter to the States, in which he regretted the opportunity that had been lost, which General Overkirk had coincided with him in thinking promised a great and glorious victory; and he added, "My heart is so full that I cannot forbear representing to your High Mightinesses, on this occasion, that I find my authority here to be much less than when I had the honour to command your troops in Germany." * The counter-memorial which the Dutch generals transmitted at the same time contains a curious picture of their idea of the subordination and direction of an army, and furnishes a key to the jealousy which had proved so fatal to the common cause. They complained that the Duke of Marlborough, "without holding a council of war, made two or three marches *for the execution of some design formed by his Grace*; and we cannot conceal from your High Mightinesses that all the generals of

* "Vers midi toute notre armée était rangée en bataille; et après avoir visité avec M. Overkirk les quatre postes que je voulais attaquer, je me flattais déjà, avec la bonté et la supériorité de nos troupes, de pouvoir bientôt féliciter vos Hautes Puissances d'une nouvelle victoire; mais lorsqu'il ne s'agissait plus que d'attaquer, on n'a pas jugé à propos de le faire. Je suis sûr que les députés de vôtres Hautes Puissances vous construiront des raisons qu'on leur alléguait de part et d'autre, et qu'ils rendront justice à M. Overkirk, en vous informant qu'il voyait avec moi que l'occasion était trop belle pour la laisser échapper. Je me suis pourtant soumis, quoique avec beaucoup de regret. *J'ai le cœur navré*. Je ne saurois m'empêcher de représenter que je me trouve ici avec beaucoup *moins d'autorité* que quand j'avois l'honneur de commander vos troupes l'année dernière en Allemagne."—*Marlb. aux Etats-Généraux*, 19th August 1705; *Hist. de Marlb.*, ii. 126, 127.

our army think it very strange *that they should not have the least notice of the said marches.*" * It has been already mentioned, that Marlborough, like every other good general, kept his designs to himself, from the impossibility of otherwise keeping them from the enemy ; and that he had the additional motive for this reserve, in the case of the Dutch deputies and generals, of being desirous "to cheat them into victory." †

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1705.

† Coxé, ii.
174, 175.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
126.

Chagrined by disappointment, and fully convinced, as Wellington was after his campaign with Cuesta and the Spaniards at Talavera, that it was in vain to attempt anything further in the face of such impediments thrown in his way by the Allies, Marlborough retired, in the beginning of September, to Tirlémont, the mineral waters of which had been recommended to him ; and in the end of October the troops on both sides went into winter-quarters. His health there rapidly revived, less from the effect of the waters, than the assurances he received, from every part of Europe, of admiration at his conduct, and indignation at the factious opposition by which he had been thwarted. His vexation at the conduct of the Dutch at this time was strongly expressed in private letters to his intimate friends ; † but, though he exerted himself to the utmost during the suspension of opera-

31.
Vexation
and mag-
nanimous
conduct of
Marlbo-
rough.

* Dutch Generals' Mem. ; COXE, ii. 174.

† "Several prisoners whom we have taken, as well as the deserters, assure us that they should have made no other defence but such as might have given them time to draw off their army to Brussels, where their baggage was already gone. By this you may imagine how I am vexed, seeing very plainly I am joined with people who will never do anything."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, August 24, 1705. "I wish the Queen all the happiness imaginable ; but really my spirits is so broke that whenever I can get from this employment I must live quietly or die."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Tirlémont, September 2, 1705 ; COXE, ii. 185.

"M. Overkirk et moi avons d'abord été reconnoître les postes que nous voulions attaquer, et l'armée étant rangée en bataille sur le midi, nous avions

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1705.

tions in the field, both by memorials to his own government and representations to the Dutch rulers, to get the direction of the army put upon a better footing, yet he had magnanimity and patriotism enough to sacrifice his private feelings to the public good. Instead of attempting, therefore, to inflame the resentment of the English cabinet at the conduct of the Dutch generals, he strove only to moderate it; and prevailed on them to suspend the sending of a formal remonstrance, which they had prepared, to the States-General, till the effect of his own private representations in that quarter was first ascertained. Even in the official account of the affair, which was published in the *London Gazette*, the conduct of the Duke was represented in much less favourable colours than it really deserved. The result proved that he had judged wisely, and his disinterested conduct met with its deserved reward. Although, in the first instance, the enemies of Marlborough in England, and the opponents of the war in Holland, were strongly excited, and raised a chorus of complaints against his conduct, they were ere long overpowered by the obvious facts of the case, and the general voice of the generous and disinterested throughout Europe. The patriotic party, both in England and at the Hague, was strongly roused in his favour; the factious accusations of the

tout d'espérer, avec la bénédiction du ciel, vu notre supériorité, et la bonté des troupes, une heureuse journée; mais MM. les Deputés de l'Etat, ayant voulu consulter leurs généraux, et les trouvant de différent sentiment d'avec M. Overkirk et moi, ils n'ont pas voulu consentir à passer outre. De sorte que tout notre dessein, après l'avoir mené jusque là, à échoué, et nous avons rebroussé chemin pour aller commencer la démolition des Lignes, et prendre Leau. Vous pouvez bien croire, Monsieur, que je suis au désespoir d'être obligé d'essayer encore ce contretemps; mais je vois bien qu'il ne faut plus songer à agir offensivement avec ces Messieurs, puisqu'ils ne veulent rien risquer, quand même ils ont tout l'avantage de leur côté."—*Marlborough au Comte de Wartenberg*, Wavre, 20 Août, 1705; *Despatches*, ii. 226.

English Tories, like those of the Whigs a century after against Wellington, were silenced; the States-General were compelled, by the public indignation, to withdraw from their commands the generals who had thwarted his measures: Schlangerberg was dismissed and never again employed, his Roman Catholic creed and jealousy of Marlborough having rendered his co-operation hopeless; and without endangering the union of the two powers, the factious selfish men, who had perilled the object of their alliance, were for ever deprived of the means of doing mischief.^{1*}

CHAP.

IV.

1705.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
129, 130.
Coxe, ii.
174-177.

But while the danger was thus abated in one quarter, it only became more serious in another. The Dutch had been protected, and hindered from breaking off from the Alliance, only by endangering the fidelity of the Austrians, and it had now become indispensable, at all hazards, to do something to appease their jealousies. The Imperial cabinet, in addition to the war in Italy, on the Upper Rhine, and in the Low Countries, had become involved in serious hostilities in Hungary, which still continued, notwithstanding all the efforts of Marlborough to appease the insurrection; and they felt the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of maintaining the contest at once in so many different quarters. The cross-march of Marlborough from the Moselle to Flanders, however loudly called for by the danger and necessities of the States, had been viewed with a jealous eye by the Emperor, as tending to lead the war away from the

^{32.}
Jealousies
of the cabi-
net of Vien-
na and the
German
powers.

* "I have reason to believe that Schlangerberg has resolved to give all the hindrance in his power to whatever should be proposed; so that you may see how the common cause is likely to prosper, when it is in the power of a *Roman Catholic* of his temper to hinder whatever may be designed. This makes it impossible for me to serve with those people."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Aug. 27, 1705; COXE, ii. 177.

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IV.

1705.

side of Lorraine, with which the German interests were wound up; and his demands were loud and frequent, now that the interests of the Dutch were sufficiently provided for, that the Duke should return with the English contingent to this, the proper theatre of offensive operations. But Marlborough's experience had taught him that as little reliance was to be placed on the co-operation of the Margrave of Baden, and the lesser German powers, as on that of the Dutch; and he felt that it was altogether in vain to attempt another campaign either in Germany or Flanders, unless some more effectual measures were taken to appease the jealousies, and secure the co-operation, of this discordant alliance than had hitherto been adopted. With this view, after having arranged matters to his satisfaction at the Hague, and after Schlangenberg had been removed from the command, he repaired to Vienna in November, and thence soon after to Berlin.¹

¹ Coxe, ii.
177-204.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
133, 134.
Ledyard,
i. 525.

33.
Great dan-
ger of affairs
in Italy.

Never was his presence at both courts more necessary, for affairs, especially in Italy, had become wellnigh desperate; and the two cabinets, instead of being roused by the common danger to greater efforts, were intent only, as is generally the case in such circumstances, on mutual recrimination. All the talents of Prince Eugene had not been able to counterbalance the great preponderance of the French force on the Italian plains. Louis XIV. had no less than 112 battalions and 118 squadrons to the south of the Alps—a force much greater than any which the confederates could oppose to him; and in consequence the Duke of Savoy had been reduced to the last extremity. The heroic defence of Verrue, which detained the French eight months before its walls, had alone averted the catastrophe during the winter of 1704-5;

but its brave garrison had at length exhausted all their means of defence, and, after blowing up the fortifications, had been obliged to abandon the place. The Duke of Savoy, with his little army, retired to Chiasso to cover his capital, and was only saved from ruin by the arrival of the eight thousand Prussians whom Marlborough had procured for him from the cabinet of Berlin. This great addition so reinforced the Imperialists under Prince Eugene that he descended from the Trentine Alps, where he had been compelled to take refuge, and, advancing towards the Adda with a view to forcing the passage of that river, encountered the enemy under Vendôme at Cassano, where a desperate battle ensued, in which both parties claimed the victory. The advantage, however, was obviously with the French, as they foiled Eugene's design of crossing the river, and pushing on to Piedmont, and forced him to fall back to a strong position in the mountains between the Adda and the Lake of Garda. But although, by his threatening position there, he suspended the fate of the Duke of Savoy, and to a certain degree held the French in check, yet his own situation was extremely hazardous ; and nothing but his great abilities, and the terror of his name, enabled the Imperialists to maintain their footing at all in Italy. Eugene himself, in letters to Marlborough, represented his condition as all but desperate ; and, to complete the misfortunes of the Allies, discord, the usual attendant on misfortune, broke out between the Duke of Savoy and Stahremberg, who commanded the Austrian forces in his army ; and the two courts, espousing their respective sides of the quarrel, were all but in a state of open rupture.¹ *

¹ Coxe, ii.
210, 216,
263. Hist.
de Marl.
ii. 133, 134.

* "The first thing we stand in need of is money, so necessary to carry on the war with vigour and effect. Had I not been so warmly pressed to for-

CHAP.
IV.

1705.

31.

Capture of
Barcelona
by Lord
Peterbo-
rough.

Affairs in Spain, though more brilliant in appearance, were in reality fraught with scarcely less danger. In pursuance of Marlborough's advice, an expedition having six thousand men on board, under the command of Lord Galway, sailed from Lisbon in September, and, after touching at Gibraltar, where they were reinforced by three regiments more, landed in Catalonia on the 22d of that month, and appeared before the strong city of Barcelona, where the Archduke Charles had many partisans. To besiege so powerful a fortress with no greater force than was without the walls might seem a hopeless attempt; but a hero accomplished that which no military talent, directed by ordinary military rules, could have effected. LORD PETERBOROUGH, whose romantic and chivalrous character, as well as consummate skill, peculiarly qualified him for the exploit, surprised Fort Monjuich, which commanded Barcelona, in the night of the 4th October, and its capture was speedily followed by the surrender of the city.* This brilliant exploit was

ward succours to Piedmont, I could have profited by my success to secure the necessary posts for maintaining my footing in Italy. But when we daily receive letters upon letters, stating that all is lost if succours do not arrive, and that all Italy clamours for peace, we must hazard much to effect a junction, or draw the enemy to an engagement. The latter expedient succeeded; but at this advanced season my army is ruined, the horses worn out, no sure footing in the country, and the enemy reassembling their forces in my front. The remedy is difficult, but must be found. The Venetians threaten to declare war against us if we do not quit their territory; the princes of Italy join in this declaration, and are inclined to form a league for their common defence."—*Eugene to Marlborough*, Oct. 1705; COXE, ii. 251.

* "I can now give you joy upon taking Barcelona, which is effected. I can modestly say such an attempt was never made by such a handful of men. We have taken in three days the castle of Monjuich, sword in hand, that resisted thirty thousand men for three months. There were five hundred men in it. We marched with one thousand men thirteen hours, and, with scaling-ladders, took a place upon a rock much stronger than Portsmouth, and had but eight hundred men, two hundred having lost us in the night."—*Lord Peterborough to his Lady*, October 6, 1705; COXE, ii. 207.

followed by the triumphant entry of Charles into Barcelona, where he was proclaimed King of Spain amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The inhabitants of Barcelona were immediately enrolled and disciplined ; six native regiments were formed, and the authority of the Archduke was recognised in the greater part of Catalonia. Thus the Imperial family was at length established on a solid footing in the east of Spain, and the rival kings unfurled their respective banners in the Peninsula. Yet was this success, brilliant as it was, not unattended with risk, and it augmented rather than diminished the difficulty which Marlborough experienced in laying down the plan of these distant operations ; for his nephew, the Duke of Berwick, natural son of James II., who commanded the French and Spanish army on the Portuguese frontier, was more than a match for the Earl of Galway, to whom he was opposed, and baffled every enterprise in that quarter ; and, from the central position of the Bourbon power at Madrid, he was enabled to direct at pleasure their forces against either side, which had no means of communicating with each other.¹

The direction of these distant and hazardous wars, as well as that of his own army, fell on the Duke of Marlborough, in addition to the still more arduous task of stifling the jealousies of the various cabinets which formed the Alliance ; and never was a more difficult duty imposed on a human being. Marlborough's extraordinary address and powers of persuasion did not desert him, however, on this critical occasion. Then was strongly exemplified the truth of Chesterfield's remark, that manner had not less weight than matter in procuring him success ; and that he was elevated to greatness as much on the wings of the Graces as by the strength of Minerva. Such was the

CHAP.
IV.
1705.

¹ Coxe, ii.
207-210.

35.
Extraordi-
nary success
of Marlbo-
rough in
appeasing
the jeal-
ousies at
Vienna.

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fame which preceded him, that his journey resembled rather the triumphant cavalcade of a sovereign prince than the march of an ordinary general. All ranks vied with each other in doing him homage. Great as were the difficulties which attended the holding together the Grand Alliance, they all yielded to the magic of his name and the fascination of his manner. At Bernsberg he succeeded in obtaining from the Elector a promise for the increase of his contingent, and leave for sending it into Italy, where its co-operation was required ; at Frankfort he overcame, by persuasion and address, the difficulties of the Margrave of Baden ; and at Vienna he was magnificently received, and soon acquired unbounded credit with the Emperor. "Heir," said the young Emperor, "to my father's throne, I inherit all his gratitude towards the conqueror of Blenheim. Your Highness's services to the common cause in general, and my family in particular, can never be erased from my memory, nor ever be forgotten by my family or posterity." Besides being raised to the rank of a prince of the Empire, with the most flattering assurances of esteem, he was fêted by the nobles, who vied with each other in demonstrations of respect to the illustrious conqueror of Blenheim. During his short sojourn of a fortnight there, he succeeded in allaying the suspicions and quieting the apprehensions of the Emperor, which no other man could have done ; and also in dissipating the irritation which had arisen between the court of Vienna and that of Turin. Having achieved these great objects, and arranged the plan of the next campaign, he raised, on his own credit, a loan from the bankers, for the Imperial court, of 100,000 crowns, as well as secured the promise of another of £250,000, which he afterwards obtained in London.¹ These subsi-

¹ Coxe, ii.
203-223.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
133-135.

dies enabled the cabinet of Vienna to send the necessary supplies to Prince Eugene, of which he stood so much in need ; and having accomplished these important objects, Marlborough set out for Berlin, where his presence was not less necessary to stimulate the exertions and appease the complaints of the King of Prussia.

He arrived there on the 30th November, and on the same evening had an audience of the King, to whose strange and capricious temper he so completely accommodated himself that he allayed all his discontents, and brought him over completely to his views. He prevailed on the monarch to renew the treaty for the furnishing of eight thousand men to aid the common cause in Italy, which he had threatened to withdraw from Prince Eugene, and to repair the chasms in their ranks produced by the campaign. He succeeded also in getting him to revoke the orders which had been issued for the return of the troops from Italy, where their removal would have proved of essential detriment. This concession, in the words of the prime-minister who announced it, was granted "as a mark of respect to the Queen, and of particular friendship to the Duke." From Berlin he proceeded, loaded with honours and presents, to Hanover, where jealousies of a different kind, but not less dangerous, had arisen in consequence of the apprehensions there entertained that the Whigs were endeavouring to thwart the eventual succession of the house of Hanover to the throne of England. Here also Marlborough's address succeeded in overcoming all difficulties ; and, after a sojourn of only a few days, he departed in the highest favour both with the Elector and his mother. From thence he hastened to the Hague, where he remained a fortnight, and succeeded in a great degree

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36.
And at Ber-
lin and
Hanover.
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in removing those difficulties, and smoothing down those jealousies, which had proved so injurious to the common cause in the preceding campaign. He prevailed on the Dutch to reject separate offers of accommodation, which had been recently before made them by the French government, and to send ten thousand German troops in their pay to reinforce Prince Eugene in Italy. Having thus put all things on as favourable a footing as could be hoped for on the Continent, he embarked for England in the beginning of January 1706, having overcome greater difficulties, and obtained greater advantages, in the course of this winter campaign, and with divided allies, than he ever did during a summer campaign with a united force against the enemy. Yet, even when thus beneficially employed for the common cause, his absence was seriously felt in the army. "In the Duke's absence," says an eyewitness, "we were a body without a soul. The French having laid down a little of their lines and rail-bridges over the Natha, for the convenience of forage, we were in perpetual alarm, as if an inferior and dispirited force would leave their lines because the Duke had left us."¹

¹ Cox, ii. 222, 231, 236. Hist. de Marl. ii. 136-139.

37.
Similarity between his present situation and that of Wellington in his early campaigns.

Every one, however cursorily he may be acquainted with Wellington's campaigns, must be struck with the great similarity between the difficulties which thus beset the Duke of Marlborough, in the earlier periods of his career, and those which at a subsequent period so long hampered the genius and thwarted the efforts of England's greatest general. Schlangenberg's jealousy was an exact counterpart of that of Cuesta at Talavera; the timidity of the Dutch authorities was precisely similar to that of the Portuguese Regency; the difficulty of appeasing the jealousy of Austria and Prussia, identical

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with that which so often compelled Wellington to hurry from the field to Lisbon and Cadiz. Such is the selfishness of human nature, that it seems impossible to get men actuated by separate interests to concur in any measures for the general good, but under the pressure of immediate danger so threatening as to be obvious to every understanding, or by the influence of ability and address of the very highest order. It is this which in every age has caused the weakness of the best-cemented confederacies, and so often enabled single powers, not possessing a fourth part of their material resources, to triumph over them. And it is in the power of overcoming these difficulties and jealousies that one of the most important qualities of the general of an alliance is to be found.

Fortunately for Marlborough and the reputation of England, the same causes which occasioned those difficulties on the Continent produced only a greater degree of unanimity and vigour in England. The reason was obvious. At the conclusion of the campaign of 1704, Marlborough, from the unexampled halo of glory with which he was surrounded, was an object of general jealousy and apprehension ; at the conclusion of that of 1705, the French, from their successes in Italy, and the abortive issue of the campaign in Flanders, had again become an object of terror. Selfishness was the cause of the opposite manifestations on both occasions. Somers, the great orator of the Whigs, now loudly praised the Government in Parliament. Marlborough, amidst universal acclamations, received on the 7th January the thanks of the Commons ; and ample supplies for carrying on the war were voted. The land troops were augmented to forty thousand men ; and he had an opportunity of evincing his magnanimity by interceding through the Duchess, with

36.
Affairs in
England
wear a more
promising
aspect.

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the Queen, for a remission of the sentence of the Pillory, which, with the barbarity unhappily prevalent at that period, had been pronounced on one Stephens, the Vicar of Sutton, for a libel on himself.* So far did the general unanimity proceed that a sort of coalition of parties took place, Godolphin publicly expressing in Parliament his approbation at the conduct of the Whigs, and Somers being equally loud in his commendation of the measures of Government. Marlborough and Godolphin seized this opportunity for realising their favourite scheme of uniting the two parties; and with this view a dinner was arranged by the two ministers at the house of Harley—Harley and St John being the leaders on one side, and Godolphin, Marlborough, Halifax, Sunderland, and Boyle on the other. Nor was this unanimity confined to the leaders of parties; it happily pervaded for a season every department of the state. “The kingdom,” says Smollett, “was blessed with plenty; the Queen was generally beloved; the people in general were zealous for the prosecution of the war; the forces were well paid; the Treasury was punctual; and though a great quantity of coin was exported for the maintenance of the war, *the paper currency supplied the deficiency so well that no murmurs were heard*, and the public credit flourished both at home and abroad.”¹

Marlborough sailed for the Continent, to take the command of the armies in the Low Countries, on the 20th April 1706. His design was to have transferred the seat of war into Italy, as affairs had become so

¹ Smollett, i. Coxe, ii. 284-289.

* “I am very glad you have prevailed with the Queen for pardoning Stephens. I should have been very uneasy if the law had not found him guilty; but much more uneasy if he had suffered the punishment on my account.”—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, May 20, 1706; COXE, ii. 284.

unpromising in that quarter as to be wellnigh desperate, and by so doing he would have avoided equally the Dutch deputies and the German princes, who had proved so fatal to former campaigns. For this purpose, he proposed to have led, in person, forty battalions and forty squadrons into Italy, where he well knew that he would find in Prince Eugene a partner in command very different from the Dutch burgomasters or German princes, who had hitherto so much impeded all his operations. Affairs in that quarter loudly called for such succour, and without it, it had become evident that Italy was lost. The Imperialists had been surprised by the French general, Vendôme, in their quarters near Como, and driven into the mountains behind that town with the loss of three thousand men; so that all hold of the plain of Lombardy was lost. The Duke of Savoy was even threatened with a siege in his capital of Turin. Nor were the prospects of the Allies more favourable in Germany and Flanders. The Margrave of Baden was displaying his usual factious and impracticable disposition on the Upper Rhine: it seemed, in Marlborough's words, "as if he had no other object in view but to cover his own capital and residence." In Flanders, the habitual procrastination and tardiness of the Dutch had so thrown back the preparations, that it was impossible to begin the campaign so early as he had intended; and the jealousies of the cabinets of Berlin and Copenhagen had again revived to such a degree that no aid was to be expected either from the Prussian or Danish contingents. It was chiefly to get beyond the reach of such troublesome and inconstant neighbours that Marlborough was so desirous of transferring the seat of war to Italy.¹

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39.

Universal
backward-
ness of the
Allies in the
commence-
ment of
1706.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
147, 148.
Coxe, ii.
295, 312.

But all his efforts to induce the States-General to allow

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40.

Marl-
borough's
great diffi-
culties in
arranging
military
operations.

any part of their troops to be employed to the south of the Alps were unavailing; nor, indeed, could it reasonably have been expected that they would consent to hazard their forces in an expedition to so distant a quarter, not immediately connected with their interests. The resentment of the Elector of Hanover at the conduct of Queen Anne had become so excessive that he positively refused to let his contingent march. The Danes and Hessians excused themselves on various pretences from moving their troops to the south; and the Emperor, instead of contributing anything to the war in Flanders, was urgent that succour should be sent to him, and that the English general should in person take the command on the Moselle. It was with the utmost difficulty, and only by his great personal influence and address, that he prevailed on the States-General to allow ten thousand men to march to reinforce Eugene, where, as will appear in the sequel, they rendered the most essential service. Marlborough was thus reduced to the English troops, and those in the pay of Holland—but they amounted to nearly sixty thousand men; and, on the 19th May, he set out from the Hague to take the command of this force, which lay in front of the old French frontier on the river Dyle. Marshal Villeroi had there collected sixty-two thousand men; so that the two armies, in point of numerical strength, were very nearly equal. But the English general had gained an immense advantage from the terrors which some successes gained by Marshal Villars at this time, on the Upper Rhine, inspired, which induced the States-General to give Marlborough the choice of his field-deputies, which rendered him, for the first time, really master of his actions, and the battle of Ramilies was the consequence.¹

¹ Coxe, ii.
295-333.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
147-150.

The English general had established a secret correspondence with one Pasquini, an inhabitant of Namur, through whose agency, and that of some other citizens of the town who were inclined to the Imperial interest, he hoped to be able to make himself master of that important fortress. To facilitate that attempt, and have troops at hand ready to take advantage of any opening that might be afforded them in that quarter, he moved from Tongres towards Tirlemont, directing his march by the sources of the Little Gheet. Determined to cover Namur, and knowing that the Hanoverians and Hessians were absent, Villeroi marched out of his lines on the Dyle, in order to stop the advance of the Allies, and give battle in the open field. On the 20th May, the English and Dutch forces effected their junction at Bilsen; and on the day following the Danish contingent arrived, Marlborough having, by great exertions, persuaded them to come up from the Rhine, upon receiving a guarantee for their pay from the Dutch government. This raised his force to seventy-three battalions and a hundred and twenty-three squadrons. The French had seventy-four battalions, and a hundred and twenty-eight squadrons. But they had a much greater advantage in the homogeneous quality of their troops, who were all of one country; while the forces of the confederates were drawn from three different nations, speaking different languages, and many of whom had never acted in the field together. Cadogan, with six hundred horse, formed the vanguard of Marlborough's army; and at daybreak on the 22d he discovered the enemy's army grouped in dense masses in the strong camp of Mont St André.¹ As their position stretched directly across the Allied line of march, a battle was unavoidable; and Marlborough was no sooner informed

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41.

Forces on
the opposite
sides in
Flanders.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
154, 155.
Coxe, ii.
339, 340.
Hist. Mil.
vi. 30-32.

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42.
Position of
the French
at Ramilies,
May 22.

of it than with a joyous heart he prepared for the conflict.*

The ground occupied by the enemy, and which has become so famous by the battle of RAMILIES which followed, was on the summit of an elevated plateau forming the highest ground in Brabant, immediately above the two sources of the Little Gheet. The elevated ground above is varied by gentle undulations, interspersed with garden grounds, and dotted with coppice woods. From it the two Gheets, the Mehaigne, and the Dyle, take their rise, and flow in different directions, so that it is the highest surface in the whole country. The descents from the summit of the plateau to the Great Gheet are steep and abrupt; but the other rivers rise in marshes and mosses, which are very wet, and in some places impassable. Marlborough was well aware of the strength of the position on the summit of this eminence, and he had used all the despatch in his power to reach it before the enemy; but Villeroi had less ground to go over, and had his troops in battle-array on the summit before the English appeared in sight. The position occupied by the French ran along the front of a curve facing inwards, and overhanging the sources of the Little Gheet. The troops were posted on the crest of the ridge above the marshes, having the village of Autre Eglise in front of the extreme left, and the villages of Offuz and Ramilies opposite their centre. The extreme right stood on the high grounds which overhang the Mehaigne, along the course of which, at a short distance, and nearly parallel to its banks, runs the

* The composition and strength of the two armies was as follows:—

ALLIES.		MEN.	FRENCH.		MEN.
Battalions,	73 }	60,000	Battalions,	74 }	62,000
Squadrons,	123 }		Squadrons,	123 }	
Guns,	120		Guns,	130	

— KAUSLER, 765.

old chaussée, which, after the lapse of more than a thousand years, still retains the name of Queen Brunchault. The right wing occupied the intermediate space, and rested on the Mehaigne; and the village of Tavières, on the banks of that river, was garrisoned by a large body of foot-soldiers. The infantry were drawn up in two lines, the villages in their front being strongly occupied by separate detachments of foot. In Ramilies alone twenty battalions were posted. The great bulk of the horse was also arranged in two lines on the right, across the chaussée of Brunchault, along which part of the Allied columns was expected to advance. On the highest point of the ridge thus occupied by the French, but immediately behind the extreme right and the mass of their cavalry, and in a position commanding the whole field of battle, the tomb or barrow of the ancient German hero Ottomond was situated. This position, it was evident, would become the object of a desperate strife between the contending parties in the approaching conflict.¹

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¹ Hist. Mil.
vi. 30-33.
Kausler,
765, 766.
Coxe, ii.
339, 340.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
156, 157.

Marlbrough advanced in person, accompanied by Overkirk, to reconnoitre the ground; and he no sooner came in sight of the enemy's position than he formed his own plan of attack. His troops were divided into ten columns; the cavalry being in two lines on each wing, the infantry in six columns in the centre. He at once saw that the French right, surmounted by the lofty plateau on which the tomb of Ottomond was placed, was the key of their position, and against that he resolved to direct the weight of his onset; but, the better to conceal his real design, he determined to make a vehement false attack on the village of Autre Eglise and their left. The nature of the ground occupied by

43.
Marlbo-
rough's
manœuvres
before the
battle, and
plan of at-
tack.

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the Allies and the enemy respectively favoured this design; for the French were posted round the segment of a circle, while the Allies occupied the centre and chord, so that they could move with greater rapidity than their opponents from one part of the field to another. Marlborough's stratagem was entirely successful. He formed, in the first instance, with some ostentation, a weighty column of attack opposite to the French left, which menaced the village of Autre Eglise. No sooner did Villeroi perceive this than he drew a considerable body of infantry from his centre behind Offuz, and marched them with the utmost expedition to reinforce the threatened point on his left. When Marlborough saw this cross-movement fairly commenced, he skilfully availed himself of a rising-ground on which the front of his column of attack on the right was placed, by directing the second line and the columns which supported it—just as the front had reached the edge of the plateau, where they obstructed the view of those behind them—to halt in a hollow, where they could not be seen, and immediately after, still concealed from the enemy's sight, to defile rapidly to the left till they came into the rear of the left centre. The Danish horse, twenty squadrons strong, under the Duke of Wirtemberg, were at the same time placed in a third line, behind the cavalry of the left wing, so as to bring the weight of his horse as well as foot into that quarter.¹

¹ Kausler, 766. Coxe, ii. 342-345. Hist. de Marl. ii. 158, 159. Hist. Mil. vi. 34-36. Kane's Campaigns, 65.

44.
Commencement of the battle, and skilful feint of Marlborough.

At half-past twelve the cannonade began on both sides with great vigour, and that of the French played heavily on the columns of the confederates advancing to the attack. The Allied right wing, directed against Autre Eglise, steadily advanced up the slopes from the

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banks of the Little Gheet to the edge of the plateau, where they halted, deployed into line, and opened their fire in such a position as entirely to conceal the transfer of the infantry and cavalry in their rear to the Allied left. No sooner had those columns in support reached it than the attack began in real earnest, and with a preponderating force in that direction. Colonel Wertmuller, with four Dutch battalions, advanced against Tavières, while twelve battalions in columns of companies, under General Schultz, supported by a strong reserve, began the attack on Ramilies in the left centre. The vehemence of this assault soon convinced Villeroi that the real attack of the Allies was in that quarter; but he had no reserve of foot to support the troops in the villages, every disposable man having been sent off to the left in the direction of Autre Eglise. In this dilemma he hastily ordered fourteen squadrons of horse to dismount, and, supported by two Swiss battalions, moved them up to the support of the troops in Tavières. Before they could arrive, however, the Dutch battalions had with great gallantry carried that village; and Marlborough directing the Danish horse, under the brave Duke of Wirtemberg, against the flank of the dismounted dragoons, as they were in column and marching up, they and the Swiss were speedily cut to pieces, and hurled back in confusion on the French horse, who were advancing to their support.¹

Following up his success, Overkirk next charged the first line of advancing French cavalry with the first line of the Allied horse; and such was the vigour of his onset that the enemy were broken and thrown back. But the second line of French and Bavarian horse, among whom were the splendid Maison du Roi, or horse-guards, of the

45.
Repulse of
Overkirk,
and immin-
ent danger
of Marlbo-
rough when
hastening to
his relief.

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French monarchy, soon came up, and assailing Overkirk's men when they were disordered by success, and little expecting another struggle, overthrew them without difficulty, drove them back in great confusion, and almost entirely restored the battle in that quarter. In this charge the French Guards, who fought with the most determined valour, particularly distinguished themselves. The danger was very great ; for the chances were that the victorious French horse, having cleared the open ground of their opponents, would wheel about and attack in rear the twelve battalions who were warmly engaged with the attack on Ramilies. Marlborough instantly saw the danger, and, putting himself at the head of seventeen squadrons at hand, led them on himself to arrest the progress of the victorious horse ; while, at the same time, he sent orders for every disposable sabre to come up from his right with the utmost expedition. Twenty squadrons were there in reserve ; they instantly wheeled threes about, and galloped off to the support of their leader. The moment was critical, and nothing but the admirable intrepidity and presence of mind of the English general could have retrieved the Allied affairs. As he was leading on this reserve with his wonted gallantry, and under a dreadful fire from the French batteries on the heights behind Ramilies, the troops wavered under the severity of the fire, and Marlborough was recognised by some French troopers, with whom he had formerly served in the time of Charles II., who made a sudden rush at him. They had wellnigh made him prisoner, for they succeeded in surrounding him before his men could come up to the rescue ; but he extricated himself from the throng of assailants by fighting his way out, like the knights of old, sword in hand.¹ He next

¹ Kausler, 706, 707.
Coxe, ii. 347. Hist. de Marl. ii. 160, 161. Hist. M^r. vi. 34, 35. Rousser, ii. 211.

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tried to leap a ditch, but his horse fell in the attempt ; and, when mounting another horse given him by his aide-de-camp Captain Molesworth, Colonel Bingfield, his equerry, who held the stirrup, had his head carried off by a cannon-ball. The imminent danger of their beloved general, however, revived the spirit of the troops. Re-forming with great celerity, they again returned with desperate resolution to the charge.

In this emergency, when nothing was as yet decided, the twenty fresh squadrons which Marlborough had so opportunely called up from the Allied right were seen galloping at full speed, but still in regular order, on the plain behind this desperate conflict. Halting directly in rear of the spot where the horse on both sides were so vehemently engaged, they wheeled into line, and advanced in close order and admirable array, to the support of the Duke, who was now hard pressed by the French Guards. At the same time the Danish squadron, led by their brave commander the Duke of Wirtemberg, debouched between the morass of Mehaigne and the right flank of the household troops, and assailed them with loud cries in flank ; while the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, with the Dutch Guards and Obdam's dragoons, dashed round their rear towards Ramilies. Encouraged by these powerful reinforcements, the whole Allied cavalry re-formed, and, led by Marlborough in person, swept forward in three lines, with loud shouts, to the attack of the now intimidated and disheartened French, who no longer withstood the onset, but, turning their horses' heads, fled with precipitation. The low grounds between Ramilies and the old chaussée were quickly passed, and the victorious horse, pressing up the slope on the opposite side, ere long reached the summit of the plateau.¹ The

46.
The twenty
squadrons
ordered up
from the
right restore
the battle.

¹ Kausler,
767, 768.
Hist. Mil.
vi. 35.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
167. Coxe,
ii. 348.

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tomb of Ottomond, the highest point, and visible from the whole field of battle, was soon seen resplendent with sabres and cuirasses, amidst a throng of horse ; and deafening shouts, heard over the whole extent of both armies, announced that the crowning point and key of the whole position had been gained.

47.
Villeroi's
efforts to
restore the
battle,
which are
unsuccess-
ful.

But Villeroi was an able and determined general, and his soldiers fought with the inherent bravery of the French nation. His Lieutenant-General, M. de Gassior, said to him at this time : " All is lost, if you do not change your order of battle ; withdraw the troops from your left to strengthen your right ; bring up your reserves ; In a few moments you will have no resource." But it was too late ; there was no time to make these dispositions. The contest, however, though virtually decided, was not yet over. A fierce fight was raging around Ramilies, where the garrison of twenty French battalions opposed a stout resistance to Schultz's grenadiers. By degrees, however, the latter gained ground ; two Swiss battalions, which had long and resolutely held their ground, were at length forced back into the village, and some of the nearest houses fell into the hands of the Allies. Upon this the whole rushed forward, and drove the enemy in a mass out towards the high grounds in the rear. The Marquis Maffei, however, rallied two regiments of Cologne Guards, in a hollow way leading up from the village to the plateau, and opposed so vigorous a resistance that he not only checked the pursuit but regained part of the village ; and the French Guards, consisting of thirteen squadrons, supported by a brigade of cavalry, made several noble charges, which in part broke the Allied columns in pursuit. But these gallant efforts, being unsupported by any reserve, could not

permanently re-establish affairs. The victorious horse were in their turn charged in flank and rear by the Allied reserves when disordered by success, and driven back with great loss; and Marlborough, whose eye was everywhere, ordered up twenty battalions which had been stationed in reserve behind the centre, and speedily cleared the village. Maffei, with his gallant troops, being charged in flank by the victorious horse at the very time that he was driven out of the village by the infantry, was made prisoner, and almost all his men were taken or destroyed.¹

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¹ Maffei,
Mem. 347.
Kausler,
768. Coxe,
ii. 348.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
162, 163.

The victory was now decided on the British left and centre, where alone the real attack had been made. But so vehement had been the onset, so desperate the passage of arms which had taken place, that though the battle had lasted little more than three hours, the victors were in nearly as great disorder as the vanquished. Horse, foot, and artillery, were everywhere blended together in confusion, more especially between Ramilies and the Mchaigne, and thence up to the tomb of Ottomond, in consequence of the various charges of all arms which so rapidly succeeded each other on the same narrow space. Marlborough seeing this, and before attempting anything more, halted his troops on the ground where they stood, which, in the left and centre, had been occupied by the enemy at the commencement of the action. Villeroi skilfully availed himself of this breathing-time to endeavour to re-form his broken troops, and to take up a new line from Geest-a-Gerompont, on his right, through Offuz to Autre Eglise, still held by its original garrison, on his left.² But in making the retrograde movement, so as to get his men into this oblique position, he was even more impeded and thrown into

48.
The enemy,
though
thrown into
disorder,
endeavour
to rally.

² Hist. Mil.
vi. 35, 36.
Coxe, ii.
349, 350.
Rousset, ii.
211, 212.

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disorder, by the baggage-waggons and dismounted guns on the heights, than the Allies had been on the plain below ; and an important hollow way, by which the greater part of the army had to retire, became wholly blocked up by overturned carriages, and quite impassable for cannon or cavalry.

49.
General advance of the
Allies,
which completes the
victory.

On observing this, Marlborough resolved to give the enemy no time to rally, but, again sounding the charge, ordered infantry and cavalry to advance. A strong column passed the morass in which the Little Gheet takes its rise, directing their steps towards Offuz ; but the enemy, panic-struck as at Waterloo by the general advance of the victors, gave way on all sides. Offuz was abandoned without a shot being fired ; the cavalry pursued the fugitives with headlong fury, and the plateau of Mont St André was soon covered with the flying enemy. The troops in observation on the right, seeing the victory gained on the left and centre, of their own accord joined in the pursuit, and soon made themselves masters of Autre Eglise and the heights behind it. The Spanish and Bavarian horse-guards made a gallant attempt to stem the flood of disaster, but without attaining their object. This only led to their own destruction. General Wood and Colonel Wyndham, at the head of the English horse-guards, charged them, and they were immediately cut to pieces. A regiment of foot which had surrendered broke its ranks to plunder, and was cut to pieces. The rout now became universal, and all resistance ceased. Fifty squadrons of horse, seeing the road blocked up, dispersed, and in wild confusion fled across the fields as hard as their horses could carry them. It was with the utmost difficulty that Villeroi succeeded in holding together a few squadrons, who kept their ranks till night-

fall. All order and thought of resistance then ceased. In frightful confusion, a disorganised mass of horse and foot, abandoning their guns, streamed over the plateau, poured headlong, on the other side, down the banks of the Great Gheet, and fled towards Louvain, which they reached in the most dreadful disorder at two o'clock in the morning. The British horse, under Lord Orkney, did not draw bridle from the pursuit till they reached the neighbourhood of that fortress ; having, besides fighting the battle, ridden full five-and-twenty miles that day. Marlborough halted for the night, and established headquarters at Mildert, thirteen miles from the field of battle, and five from Louvain.¹

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¹ Mem. de
Maffei,
349, 350.
Coxe, ii.
350, 351.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
164-166.
Rousset,
ii. 212.
Hist. Mil.
vi. 37, 38.

The trophies of the battle of Ramilies were immense ; but they were even exceeded by its results. The loss of the French in killed and wounded was 7000 men, and, in addition to that, 6000 prisoners were taken. With the desertions which took place after the battle, they were weakened by fully 15,000 men. They lost fifty-two guns, their whole baggage and pontoon train, all their caissons, and eighty standards wrested from them in fair fight. Among the prisoners were the Princes de Soubise and Rohan, and a son of Marshal Tallard. The victors lost 1066 killed, and 2567 wounded ; in all, 3633. The great and unusual proportion of the killed to the wounded shows how desperate the fighting had been, and how much of it, as in ancient warfare, had been in hand-to-hand contest. But, great as these trophies were, they were much enhanced by the circumstance that all the King of France's household troops, and with them the best forces of the monarchy, were engaged. Marlborough, after the battle, paid a graceful compliment to the French Guards. "They are

50.
Losses of
the French
and the
Allies in
the battle.

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more," said he, "than men ; and I knew them so well that I brought six cavaliers to bear on every one of their sabres." In fact, the loss of the battle was in some degree owing to such trust being reposed in their valour that there was no reserve in rear to support them when assailed by superior forces. Overkirk nobly supported the Duke in this action, and not only repeatedly charged at the head of his cavalry, but continued on horseback in the pursuit till one in the morning, when he narrowly escaped death from a Bavarian officer he had made prisoner, and to whom he had given back his sword, saying, " You are a gentleman, and may keep it." The base wretch no sooner got it into his hand than he made a lounge at the Dutch general, but fortunately missed his blow, and was immediately cut down for his treachery by Overkirk's orderly.¹

¹ Kausler, 769. Coxe, ii. 351-353. Hist. de Marl. ii. 167, 168, 170.

51. Marlborough's humanity and courtesy after the battle.

The humanity displayed by the victorious general was as remarkable as his skill and valour during the combat. The wounded and sick of the enemy were lodged in hospitals, and treated with the same care and attention as the troops of the Allies. The prisoners were conveyed into Holland, where, by his express directions, they were supplied with all the comforts which their situation required. To his noble example, displayed on this and other occasions, we are indebted for much of the humanity which accompanies the operations of war in modern times ; and which, equally removed from the savage cruelty of ancient warfare, which conquered only to destroy, or the interested self-restraints of the feudal ages, which preserved only to gain, softens the miseries of war by mitigating its spirit, and sees only a brother in an enemy when he has ceased to resist. A French historian bears testimony to this noble quality in the

English general. "The Duke of Marlborough," says Duclos, "always showed the utmost attention to his prisoners, and set the example of that humanity which has since softened the horrors and calamities of war."* Nor was the King of France behind his victorious opponent in magnanimous sentiments, which were only the more striking from being uttered in adversity. "M. le Maréchal," said the monarch, when Villeroi was first presented to him after his defeat, "at our age we can no longer reckon on good fortune."¹

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
170-172.
Coxe, ii.
353, 354.

The immediate result of this splendid victory was the acquisition of nearly all Austrian Flanders. Brussels, Louvain, Meehlin, Alort, Luise, and all the chief towns of Brabant, opened their gates immediately after it. Ghent and Bruges speedily followed the example; and Daun and Oudenarde soon declared for the Austrian cause. Of all the cities in Flanders, Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, and Dunkirk, alone held out for the French; and to their reduction the Duke immediately turned his attention. The public transports in Holland knew no bounds; they much exceeded what had been felt for the victory of Blenheim, for that only saved Germany, but this delivered themselves. The wretched jealousy which had so long thwarted the Duke, as it does every other really great man, in the outset of his career, was fairly overpowered in the universal transports. In England, the rejoicings were equally enthusiastic; and a solemn thanksgiving at St Paul's, which the Queen attended in person, gave a willing vent to the general gratitude. "Faction and the French," as Bolingbroke expressed it,† "were all

52.
And its
great re-
sults.

* DUCLOS, i. 9.

† "This vast addition of renown which your Grace has acquired, and the wonderful preservation of your life, are subjects upon which I can never express a thousandth part of what I feel. *France and faction are the only ene-*

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that Marlborough had to fear, and he had fairly conquered both." Above all, the magnitude of his renown rid him, for a time at least, of those vexatious councils of war which had so often thwarted his best-laid plans.* But the snake, though scotched, was not killed.† The adverse party replenished their venom, and prepared their attacks, even during the roar of triumphant cannon and the festive blaze of rejoicing cities. Marlborough regarded himself only as an instrument in the hand of the Almighty for the liberation of mankind. "I bless God," said he, in a letter to the Duchess, "that he has been pleased to make me the instrument of doing so much service to the Queen, to England, and to all Europe; for it is most certain that we have destroyed the greatest part of the best troops of France. My dearest soul, I have now the great pleasure of thinking that I may have the happiness of ending my days in quiet with you. I have appointed next Sunday for a thanksgiving by the army to God for the protection He has been pleased to give us.¹ I hope the Queen will appoint a speedy thanksgiving at St Paul's;

¹ Coxe, ii.
355-367.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
173, 174.

mies England has to fear, and your Grace will conquer both; at least, while you beat the French, you give a strength to the government which the other dares not contend with."—*Bolingbroke to Marlborough*, May 28, 1706; COXE, ii. 358.

* "The consequences of this battle are likely to be greater than that of Blenheim; for we have now the whole summer before us, and, with the blessing of God, I will make the best use of it. *For as I have had no council of war before this battle, so I hope to have none during the whole campaign*; and I think we may make such work of it as may give the Queen the glory of making a safe and honourable peace, for the blessing of God is certainly with us."—*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin*, May 27, 1706; COXE, ii. 365.

† "I shall attend the Queen at the Thanksgiving on Thursday next: I assure you I shall do it, from every vein within me, having scarce anything else to support my head or heart. *The animosity and inveteracy one has to straggle against is unimaginable*, not to mention the difficulty of obtaining things to be done that are reasonable, or of satisfying people with reason when they are done."—*Godolphin to Marlborough*, May 24, 1706.

for the goodness of God is so very great, that, if He had suffered us to be beaten, the liberties of all the Allies had been lost." *

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The French, after this terrible defeat, retired in the deepest dejection towards French Flanders, leaving garrisons in the principal fortresses which still held out for them. Marlborough made his triumphant entry into Brussels in great pomp on the 28th May, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The Three Estates of Brabant, assembled there, acknowledged Charles III. for their sovereign, and received, in return, a guarantee from the English government and the States-General that the *joyeuse entrée*, the Magna Charta of Flanders, should be faithfully observed. "Everywhere," says Marlborough, "the joy was great at being delivered from the insolence and exactions of the French." The victory of Ramilies produced no less effect on the northern courts, whose jealousies and lukewarmness had hitherto proved so pernicious to the common cause. The King of Prussia, who had hitherto kept aloof, and suspended the march of his troops, now, on the mediation of Marlborough, became reconciled to the Emperor and the States-General; and the Elector of Hanover, forgetting his apprehensions about the English succession, was among the foremost to offer his congratulations, and make a tender of his forces to the now triumphant cause. It is seldom that the prosperous want friends.¹

53.
Retreat of
the French
from Fland-
ers, and
universal
joy at its
liberation.

¹ Coxé, ii.
363, 364.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
177-179.

The Dutch, upon the submission of Brabant, were anxious to levy contributions in it as a conquered country, for the purpose of relieving themselves of part of the expenses of the war; and Godolphin, actuated

* *Marlborough to the Duchess*, May 16-27, 1706; COXE, ii. 366.

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1706.

54.

Magnanimous wisdom of Marlborough in protecting the Flemings from oppression.

by the same short-sighted views, was eager to replenish the English exchequer from the same source. But Marlborough, like Wellington in after days, had magnanimity and wisdom enough to see the folly, as well as injustice, of thus alienating infant allies at the moment of their conversion; and he combated the project so successfully that it was abandoned.* At the same time he preserved the strictest discipline on the part of his troops, and took every imaginable precaution to secure the affections and allay the apprehensions of the inhabitants of the ceded provinces.† The good effects of this wise and conciliatory policy were soon apparent. As in the south of France, in Soult's words in after days, "Every peasant wished to be under their protection." Without firing a shot, the Allies gained greater advantages during the remainder of the campaign than they could have done by a series of bloody sieges, and the sacrifice of thirty thousand men.¹

¹ Coxe, ii. 367-372. Rousset, ii. 213. Hist. de Marlborough, ii. 179, 180.

* *Duke of Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley*, June 14, 1706.

† "Attendu qu'il a plu à Dieu d'accorder aux armes des Allies une victoire sur les troupes Françaises, qui nous a ouvert l'entrée des Pays Bas Espagnoles, nous sommes résolu de protéger ces provinces, et d'en maintenir les habitants en qualité de sujets fidèles de sa Majesté dans la possession paisable de leurs biens quelconques. Nous défendons, en conséquence, à tous officiers et soldats de notre armée de causer le moindre dommage aux habitants : leur enjoignant, au contraire, de leur donner toute l'assistance qu'ils demanderont ; déclarant, en outre, que tout soldat qui seroit surpris volant, pillant, ou portant quelque autre dommage aux dits habitants, dans leurs maisons, bestiaux, meubles, ou d'autres effets, sera sur le champ puni de mort : et pour réprimer les maraudeurs autant que faire se peut, et obliger les officiers de tenir la main à l'observation de la plus exacte discipline, nous déclarons que tout corps ou régiment, au quel appartiendront les soldats transgresseurs de nos ordres, sera tenu d'indemniser les dits habitants de toutes les pertes qu'ils auront souffertes, et ce sans autre forme de procédure ni autre preuve que la surpris en flagrant délit des dits soldats, qui, comme il a été dit ci-dessus, seront punis de mort sans miséricorde."—*Marlborough*, 26th May 1706 ; *Hist. de Marlborough*, ii. 179, 180. This is almost identical with Wellington's proclamation on entering France after the battle of Waterloo.—See ALISON'S *Europe*, chap. xcv. § 5, note.

The Estates of Brabant, assembled at Brussels, sent injunctions to the governor of Antwerp, Ghent, and all the other fortresses within their territories, to declare for Charles III., and admit their troops. The effect of this, in connection with the well-known discipline preserved by the Allied army, and the protection from contributions, was very decided. No sooner were the orders received at Antwerp than a schism broke out between the French regiments in the garrison and the Walloon Guards. The latter declared for Charles III.; and the approach of Marlborough's army, and the intelligence of the submission of the other cities of Brabant, brought matters to a crisis. After some altercation, it was agreed that the French troops should march out with the honours of war, and be escorted to Bouchain, within the frontier of their own country. Accordingly, on the 6th June this magnificent fortress, which it had cost the Prince of Parma so vast an expenditure of blood and treasure to reduce, and which Napoleon said was itself worth a kingdom, was gained without firing a shot. Oudenarde, which had been in vain besieged in the last war by William III., at the head of sixty thousand men, immediately followed the same example; and Ghent and Bruges, besides, speedily opened their gates. Flanders, bristling with fortresses, the possession of which in the early part of the war had been of such signal service to the French, was, with the exception of Ostend, Dunkirk, and two or three smaller places, entirely gained by the consternation produced by this single battle. Well might Marlborough say, "The consequences of our victory are almost incredible.¹ A whole country, with so many strong places, delivered up without the least resistance, shows not only the great loss

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55.
Capitulation of
Ghent,
Bruges,
Antwerp,
and Oudenarde.

¹ Rousset, ii. 213, 214. Marlborough to Secretary Harley, 3d June 1706. Marlb. Des. ii. 554.

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56.
Marlbo-
rough's
hopes for
a speedy
peace.

they must have sustained, but likewise the terror and consternation they are in."

At this period, Marlborough hoped the war would be speedily brought to a close, and that a glorious peace would reward his own and his country's efforts. His thoughts constantly reverted, as his private correspondence shows, to home, quiet, and domestic happiness. To the Duchess he wrote at this period—"You are very kind in desiring I would not expose myself. Be assured I love you so well, and am so desirous of ending my days quietly with you, that I shall not venture myself but when it is absolutely necessary; and I am sure you are so kind to me, and wish so well to the common cause, that you had rather see me dead than not do my duty. I am persuaded that this campaign will bring in a good peace; and I beg of you to do all that you can that the house of Woodstock may be carried up as much as possible, that I may have the prospect of living in it."* Even after it had become apparent that France would not sue for peace this year, he entertained sanguine hopes of being able to terminate the war in the next. "I must own to you," said he, "that I see so many difficulties that I dare not flatter you with the hope of having Dunkirk this year; and I am also of opinion that France will find itself in such a condition next winter, that, rather than endure the next campaign, they will consent to any reasonable terms for a peace; but as God has blessed the beginning of this campaign beyond what could be hoped, it is our duty to improve it as far as occasion shall offer." But these anticipations were not to be realised;¹ and before he sank into the grave the hero was destined to

¹ Marlbo-
rough to
the Duchess,
June 24,
1706. *Coxe*,
ii. 373.

* *Marlborough to Duchess of Marlborough*, May 31, 1706.

drain to the dregs the cup of envy, jealousy, and ingratitude.

His first step of moment, after consolidating these important conquests, and preventing the cupidity of the Dutch from forcing contributions from the inhabitants, which would only have endangered his conquests before they were well secured, was to undertake the siege of Ostend, the most considerable place in Flanders which still held out for the French interest. This place, celebrated for its great strength and the long siege of three years which it had stood against the Spanish under Spinola, when it occasioned a loss of eighty thousand men to the besiegers, was expected to make a very protracted resistance ; but such was the terror now inspired by Marlborough's name that it was reduced much sooner than had been anticipated. Every preparation had been made for a vigorous defence. It was garrisoned by six thousand men, plentifully supplied with ammunition and provisions. But all was unavailing. A British fleet of nine ships of the line lay off the harbour, and a formidable besieging-train was brought up from Antwerp and Brussels. To cover the siege, Marlborough took post at Roussellaer. Overkirk, in the first instance, made an attack, with forty battalions and thirty squadrons, against Nieuport, and reduced the fort of Nieuedeim, which commanded one of the dikes leading to that fortress ; but the opening of the sluices prevented any further operations in that quarter, and all the forces were directed against Ostend. Trenches were opened on the 28th June ; the counterscarp was blown in on the 6th July ; a vigorous bombardment from the batteries and the fleet spread terror through the citizens ;¹ and the day following, the besieged, after a fruitless sally, capitulated, and

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57.

Siege and
capture of
Ostend.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
193-195.
Coxe, ii.
379-381.

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the Flemish part of the garrison entered the service of the Allies. The garrison was five thousand strong when it surrendered ; two ships of the line were taken in the harbour ; and the total loss of the besiegers was only five hundred men.

58.
Commence-
ment of the
siege of
Menin, and
its great
difficulties.

Menin was next besieged ; but it made a more protracted resistance. Its great strength consisted in the means which the governor of the fortress possessed of flooding at will the flat and extensive plains in which it is situated. Its fortifications had always been reckoned as one of the most perfect of Vauban's masterpieces ; the garrison was ample ; and the governor, who was a man of resolution, was encouraged to make a vigorous resistance, by assurances of succour made to him by the French government. Its possession would give great advantages to the Allies, as it enabled them, as from a central position, to threaten alike Lille, Tournay, and Ypres, three of the great frontier fortresses of France. It was to be expected, therefore, that great exertions would be made to prevent its fall : nor were means wanting for this purpose ; for Louis XIV. had made the utmost efforts to repair the consequences of the disaster at Ramilies. Marshal Marsin had been detached from the Rhine with eighteen battalions and fourteen squadrons ; and, in addition to that, thirty battalions and forty squadrons were marching from Alsace. These great reinforcements, with the addition of nine battalions which were in the lines on the Dyle when the battle of Ramilies was fought, would, when all assembled, have raised the French army to one hundred and ten battalions and one hundred and forty squadrons—or above ninety thousand men ; whereas Marlborough, after employing thirty-two battalions and forty squadrons in the siege, could only spare for the

covering army about seventy-two battalions and eighty squadrons, not containing fifty thousand. The numerical superiority, therefore, was very great on the side of the enemy, especially when the Allies were divided by the necessity of carrying on the siege; and Villeroi, who had lost the confidence of his men, had been replaced by one of the best generals in the French service, the Duke de Vendôme, already illustrious by his recent victory over the Imperialists in Italy. He openly avowed his intention to raise the siege, and, as if with that view, he approached the covering army closely. But Marlborough persevered in his design; for, to use his own words, “the Elector of Bavaria says he is promised a hundred and ten battalions, and they are certainly stronger in horse than we. But even if they had greater numbers, I neither think it is their interest nor their inclination to venture a battle; for our men are in heart, and theirs are cowed.”¹*

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¹ Coxe, iii.
1-4. Hist.
de Marl.
ii. 203-205.
Hist. Mil.
vi. 83-85.

The place was invested on the 30th July, and soon after the heavy artillery of the besiegers arrived from Ghent; but considerable difficulties were experienced in the first instance in bringing the siege equipage up to the trenches, in consequence of the inundations which the governor had let loose. At length, however, a drought having set in in the beginning of August, these obstacles were overcome, the approaches were rapidly pushed forward, and on the 9th August the besiegers' fire opened, while Marlborough took post at Helchin to cover the siege. On the 18th, the fire of the breaching batteries had been so effectual that it was deemed practicable to make an assault on the covered-way; and as a determined resistance was anticipated,

59.
It is at
length car-
ried by as-
sault, Aug.
22.

* *Marlborough to Secretary Harley, Helchin, 9th August 1706; Desp. iii. 69.*

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the Duke repaired to the spot to superintend the attack. At seven in the evening, the signal was given by the explosion of two mines, and the troops, with the English in front, rushed to the assault. They soon cut down the palisades, and, throwing their grenades before them, ere long got into the covered-way ; but they were there exposed to a dreadful fire from two ravelins which enfladed it. For two hours they bore it without flinching, labouring hard to erect barricades so as to get under cover ; but this was not accomplished before fourteen hundred of the brave assailants had been struck down. The success, though so dearly purchased, was decisive. The establishment of the besiegers in this important lodgment, in the heart, as it were, of their works, so distressed the enemy that on the 22d they hoisted the white flag, and capitulated on the following day, though still four thousand three hundred strong. Fifty-five bronze and ten iron guns were found in the place, with eleven hundred double barrels of powder, and immense stores of provisions. Among the guns were four bearing the arms of England, taken at the battle of Neerwinde, the recovery of which gave the greatest joy to the soldiers. The besiegers lost three thousand men in this arduous siege. The reduction of this strong and celebrated fortress gave the most unbounded satisfaction to the Allies, as it not only materially strengthened the barrier against France, and in a manner gave them an entrance into its territory, but, having taken place in presence of the Duke de Vendôme and his powerful army, drawn together from all quarters with such diligence to raise the siege, it afforded the strongest proof of the superiority they had now acquired over their enemy in the field.¹

¹ Marlborough to Duke of Savoy, 25th Aug. 1706. Marl. Des. iii. 101. Coxe, iii. 5-7. Hist. de Marl. ii. 205, 206. Hist. Mil. vi. 39-106.

Upon the fall of Menin, Vendôme, who was now as

well convinced as his predecessor, Villeroi, of the impossibility of meeting the Allies in the open field, collected his troops, and took up a position behind the Lys and the Dyle, in order to cover Lille, against which he supposed the intentions of Marlborough were next to be directed. But the Duke had another object in view; for he immediately moved the besieging force to Dendermonde, still keeping post himself with his covering army at Helechin, so as to bar the access to that fortress. Being situated on the banks of the Scheldt, it was so completely within the power of the governor to hinder the approaches of the besiegers, by letting out the waters, that the King of France—who had himself been foiled before that fortress, by its inundations, in a former case—said, on hearing they had commenced its siege, “They must have an army of ducks to take it.” An extraordinary drought at this period, however, which lasted seven weeks, had so lowered the Scheldt and canals that the approaches were pushed with great celerity, and on the 5th September the garrison surrendered at discretion. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin on this occasion—“The taking of Dendermonde, making the garrison prisoners of war, was more than could have been expected; but I saw they were in a consternation. That place could never have been taken but by the hand of God, which gave us seven weeks without rain. The rain began the day after we had taken possession, and continued without intermission for the three next days.”¹

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60.

Siege and
fall of Den-
dermonde,
Sept. 5.

¹ Marlbo-
rough to
Godolphin,
Sept. 4,
1706. Coxe,
iii. 8-10.
Hist. Mil.
vi. 106-126.

Ath was the next object of attack. This small but strong fortress was of great importance, as lying on the direct road from Mons to Brussels by Halle; and, in consequence of that circumstance, it was rendered a fortress of the first order when the barrier of strongholds,

61.
And of Ath,
which con-
cludes the
campaign,
October 4.

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1706.

insanely demolished by Joseph II. before the war of the Revolution, was restored by the Allies, under the direction of Wellington, after its termination. Marlborough intrusted the direction of the attack to Overkirk, while he himself occupied, with the covering army, the position of Leuze. Vendôme's army was so much discouraged that he did not venture to disturb the operations of Marlborough; but retiring behind the Scheldt, between Condé and Mortagne, contented himself with throwing strong garrisons into Mons and Charleroi, which he apprehended would be the next objects of attack. The operations of the besiegers against Ath were pushed with great vigour till the 4th October, when the garrison, eight hundred strong, all that remained out of two thousand, who manned the works when the siege began, surrendered as prisoners of war. Marlborough was very urgent after this success to undertake the siege of Mons, which would have completed the conquest of Brabant and Flanders, and which would then have been an easy acquisition, though, in a subsequent campaign, it was only taken after the terrible battle of Malplaquet and the loss of twenty thousand men. Vendôme fully expected that this siege would be next undertaken, and he was in no condition to interrupt it; but Marlborough could not persuade the Dutch authorities to furnish him with the requisite stores.¹ * After a parade of his army in the open field near Cambron, in the hope of drawing

¹ Hist. de Marl., ii. 215, 216. Coxe, iii. 10-14. Hist. Mil. vi. 126-128.

* "If the Dutch can furnish ammunition for the siege of Mons we shall undertake it, for, if the weather continues fair, we shall have it much cheaper this year than the next, when they have had time to recruit their army. The taking of that town would be a very great advantage to us for the opening of next campaign, which we must make if we would bring France to such a peace as will give us quiet hereafter."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, October 14, 1706; COXE, iii. 14.

Vendôme, who boasted of having 140 battalions and 180 squadrons at his command, to a battle, in which he was disappointed, Marlborough resigned the command to Overkirk, put the army into winter-quarters, and hastened to Brussels, to commence the arduous duty of endeavouring to compose the jealousies and secure the union of the discordant powers of the Alliance.*

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Marlborough was received in the most splendid manner, and with unbounded demonstrations of joy, at Brussels, not only by the inconstant populace, but by the deputies of the three Estates of Brabant, which were assembled there in regular and permanent sovereignty. Well might they lavish their demonstrations of respect and gratitude on the English general; for never in modern times had more important or glorious events signalised a successful campaign. In five months the power of France had been so completely broken, and the towering temper of its inhabitants so lowered, that their best general, at the head of above a hundred thousand men, did not venture to measure swords with the Allies, who were only masters of two-thirds of their numerical strength in the field. By the effects of a single victory, the whole of Brabant and Flanders, studded with the strongest fortresses in Europe—each of which in former wars had required months, some years, for their reduction—had been gained to the Allied arms. Between those taken on the field of Ramilies, and subsequently in the besieged fortresses, above twenty thousand men

62.
Splendid
reception
of Marlbo-
rough at
Brussels,
and great
results of
the cam-
paign.

* “M. de Vendôme tells his officers he has 140 battalions and 180 squadrons, and that, if my Lord Marlborough gives him an opportunity, he will pay him a visit before this campaign ends. I believe he has neither will nor power to do it, which we shall see quickly, for we are now camped in so open a country that, if he marches to us, we cannot refuse fighting.”—*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin*, October 14, 1706; COXE, iii. 14.

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had been made prisoners, and twice that number lost to the enemy by the sword, sickness, and desertion. France now made head against the Allies in Flanders only by drawing together her forces from all other quarters, and starving the war in Italy and on the Rhine, besides straining every nerve in the interior. This state of almost frenzied exertion could not last. Already the effects of Marlborough's triumph at the commencement of the campaign had appeared, in the total defeat of the French in their lines before Turin, by Prince Eugene, on the 18th September, and their expulsion from Italy. It was the reinforcements procured for him, and withheld from his opponents, by Marlborough, which obtained for the Prince this glorious victory, at which the English general, with the generosity of true greatness, rejoiced even more sincerely than he had done in any triumphs of his own.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
15-17.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
213-220.

63.
Splendid
campaign
of Eugene
in Italy.

That immortal campaign, which put the keystone into the arch of Prince Eugene's fame, began with very different appearances. Surprised, as already noticed, in their winter-quarters, near Como, by Vendôme, the Imperialists had been seriously defeated at Calcinato, with the loss of three thousand men, and driven into the Alps, behind Verona, where they found refuge in the strength of the passes of the Italian Tyrol, and the patriotic courage of the inhabitants, so often in disaster the stay of the Austrian monarchy. Meanwhile the French, now delivered from all disquietude in the field, approached Turin, and commenced the siege of that city, the capital of Victor Amadeus, the conquest of which would have given them the entire command of Italy. But Eugene, like Napoleon in after days in similar circumstances, was not idle during his adversity : on the contrary, he

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was then preparing one of the greatest blows which the annals of war have recorded. He was so inferior to the enemy in the field that he could not venture out of his stronghold until the reinforcements procured for him by the efforts and address of Marlborough arrived ; but meanwhile he was indefatigably employed in reorganising his army, and preparing the means of carrying into execution the great designs which he had in contemplation. These succours arrived, to the number of ten thousand, in the middle of July, and this reinforcement, with others which he had received, raised Eugene's force to forty thousand men ; while Vendôme, who commanded the army opposed to him, destined to cover the siege of Turin, had seventy-three battalions and seventy-one squadrons, mustering forty-two thousand sabres and bayonets.¹

¹ Hist. Mil.
vi. 200-210.
Coxe, ii. 18.

Restored thus to an equality of force, Eugene did not lose a day in marching to the relief of the Duke of Savoy's capital, which was now very hard pressed, having sustained three months of open trenches. The trenches had been opened on 26th May. Descending from the Alps behind, between Rivoli and Verona, he divided his army, when he arrived in the plains, into two bodies : the one of which, consisting of twenty-four thousand men, crossed the Po, and advanced by the right bank of that river under himself in person ; while a smaller body of sixteen thousand moved along the left bank, between that river and the foot of the Alps. Difficulties deemed insurmountable lay in his way during this march. His force in all was sixty-three battalions and ninety-nine squadrons when he joined the Elector of Savoy. He had to pass, in presence of the enemy, the three great rivers which there intersect the plain of

64.
Victory of
Turin, Au-
gust 30.

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Lombardy—the Adige, the Mincio, and the Po ; and, driving the French before him, to reach, by a long circuit of sixty leagues, the Pass of Stradella, between the Apennines and the latter river, so as to menace by their southern flank the army besieging Turin. In doing this, he had to gain several marches on the Duke of Orleans, who was directly opposed to him on the north bank of the Po, and commanded the French army, after Vendôme had been recalled to make head against Marlborough in Flanders. The French, between the besieging and the covering army, had ninety-six battalions and a hundred and forty squadrons to oppose to him. But the vigour and activity of Eugene surmounted every obstacle. He reached the important strategical point of Stradella before the Duke of Orleans, and nothing could thereafter prevent his junction with the Duke of Savoy, which was effected, with consummate skill, on the 4th September, near Turin. The two generals met in a meadow, near Carmagnuola, and immediately arranged an attack on the French, who were posted within their lines of circumvallation around that capital. To the master of his household, who inquired where he intended to dine on the following day, Eugene replied, “At Turin.” Nor did the event contradict these sanguine expectations. Having surveyed the enemy’s whole position and lines from the heights of the Superga, which overlook the capital, he gave orders for a general attack on the intrenched camp on the following day. Energy and generalship here overcame superiority in numbers and strength of position : the hostile lines between the Doria and the Stura were attacked and carried after an obstinate resistance ; one after another, the whole intrenchments of the besiegers fell into the hands of the

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assailants; and the victorious generals made their triumphant entry into Turin at the very moment that several breaches in the rampart had been declared practicable, and the besieged had blown away their last barrel of powder. In this decisive action Marshal Marsin was mortally wounded and made prisoner; nine thousand men were killed, wounded, or taken; the whole artillery and baggage of the enemy fell into the hands of the victors; and the army which had so lately threatened Turin with instant capture was driven, in disorder and with disgrace, over the Alps into Dauphiny.¹

¹ Relation du M. le Duc d'Orleans, Sept. 7, 1706. Hist. Mil. vi. 691, 712, 713. Coxe, ii. 19, 20.

The consequences of this victory were even greater than the triumph itself; and they deservedly place it among the most memorable battles which have occurred in modern times. The whole of Italy became the prize of the victor. The French troops on the north of the Peninsula hastened in dismay across the Alps; the fortresses they still held in Piedmont were all besieged and taken; the kingdom of Naples, cut off from all succour from France or Spain, by this victory by land, and by the English fleets by sea, was obliged to conclude a separate peace, and accept the Imperial government; and the convention of Milan, on 13th March 1707, after the citadel of that city was taken, was almost word for word the same as that of Alessandria a century after, which, following the battle of Marengo, gave Napoleon the command of the whole of Italy. Too great to feel jealousy even of such splendid achievements, too patriotic to envy the success of a rival general and foreign power, Marlborough testified the utmost joy at this glorious victory; * while Eugene, not less generous,

65.
Great consequences of this victory, and its analogy to Marengo.

* "I have now received the confirmation of the success in Italy from the Duke of Savoy to Prince Eugene, and it is impossible for me to express the

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ascribed the success mainly, and with justice, to the great succour which Marlborough had procured for him from the northern courts.* In truth, it was owing to both these great men—to the one for the reinforcements obtained, which none but himself could have got from the northern powers, to the other for the masterly way in which the best possible use was made of them. Eugene won Italy, in 1706, when affairs to all appearance were nearly desperate, in the same manner as Napoleon, in circumstances nearly as hopeless, reconquered it in 1800. Issuing from the valley of the Adige when Turin was besieged, and seriously endangered by a superior army, he crossed three great rivers, driving the enemy before him on both banks of the Po, gained by a circuitous march of sixty leagues the *Pass of Stradella*, from whence he effected his junctions with the Duke of Savoy, and with their united forces gained the decisive victory of Turin, which immediately gave him the command of Piedmont, and with it, ere long, of all Italy. Issuing from the valley of Aosta, after having surmounted the snowy ridge of the St Bernard, Napoleon advanced to the relief of Genoa, besieged by a superior force, by Milan : he crossed three great rivers—the Sesia, the Ticino, and the Po—driving the enemy

joy it has given me, *for I do not only esteem, but I really love that Prince*. This glorious action must bring France so low, that, if our friends can be persuaded to carry on the war one year longer with vigour, we could not fail, with the blessing of God, *to have such a peace as would give us quiet in our days*; but the Dutch are at this time unaccountable.”—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, September 26, 1706 ; COXE, iii. 20, 21.

* “Your Highness will not, I am sure, be displeased to hear by the Baron de Hondorf of the signal advantage which the arms of His Majesty and his Allies have gained over the enemy. *You have had so great a hand in it, that you must permit me to thank you again*.”—*Eugene to Marlborough*, September 7, 1706 ; COXE, iii. 20.

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before him on both banks of the latter river ; by a circuitous march of sixty leagues he gained the *Pass of Stradella* in time to anticipate the arrival of the enemy in force there ; advanced across the plain of Piedmont, encountered and defeated the Austrians at Marengo—a victory ere long followed by the convention of Alessandria, which gave him the entire command of Italy. Victory, in both cases, was gained by an inferior force, which, being skilfully applied to the decisive point where the enemy's communication with the Peninsula was maintained, at once cut it asunder. It was like a stab in the jugular artery, or a blow on the spinal marrow. History is not useless when it traces such great and decisive consequences to the successive application by great generals of the same simple and elementary principles.¹

¹ Dumas—
Précis des
Événem.
Mil. iv.
362-369.

If the campaign of Eugene in Italy, in 1706, affords a parallel complete in every part to the triumph of Marengo, a century after, by the application of the same principles, that in Spain in the same year affords as remarkable a contrast to those of Wellington in the Peninsula, in consequence of the application of different ones. The campaign in the outset presented the most encouraging prospects. Charles had thrown himself into Barcelona, where he was ere long besieged by a formidable army of French and Spaniards ; while Lord Peterborough, in the mountains in their rear, did his utmost to raise the siege, and organise a force capable of meeting the enemy in the field. But notwithstanding all his heroism and his ability, he was unable seriously to interrupt the operations of the besiegers, and the fortress was only preserved by the heroic resolution of Charles, who declared his determination to

66.
Affairs of
Spain.
Raising of
the siege of
Barcelona,
and advance
of the Allies
to Madrid.

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bury himself under the ruins of the last bastion, rather than surrender. He was induced to prolong his defence, with such firmness, in the hope of obtaining succour from the British fleet, which was hourly expected. At length, on June 9th, the long-looked-for sails appeared in the bay : nine ships of the line, with ample stores and supplies, approached the walls ; and the besiegers were struck with such consternation by this event that they precipitately raised the siege, abandoning a hundred and ten pieces of heavy artillery, and all the stores and siege equipage, and retreated in disorder towards Madrid. Lord Peterborough was immediately sent to organise a force in Valencia ; and Lord Galway, who commanded the United British and Portuguese army on the frontier of Leon, and who had advanced without molestation as far as the bridge of Almaraz, encouraged by this great advantage, continued his march, and entered Madrid without opposition, on the 26th June, (O. S.), when the Austrian Archduke was proclaimed King of Spain and the Indies.¹

¹ Hist. Mil.
vi. 784-795.
Coxe,
House of
Spain, c.
14. Coxe,
Marlb. ii.
373, 374 ;
iii. 25-27.

67.
Subsequent
disasters,
and loss of
Madrid.

But these brilliant prospects were soon overcast, and disaster long-continued and irremediable followed the aurora which rose in such splendid colours. Peterborough, who, with all his great heroic qualities, was not without a large intermixture of eccentricity and irritability, soon experienced the evils of that slowness in action, boasting in words, and jealousy of foreigners, which has ever characterised the Spanish character, of which Wellington in after time so grievously complained, and which, in spite of his consummate judgment and admirable temper, so often marred his best-laid plans, and all but ruined the cause of independence in the Peninsula. Lord Galway experienced a lukewarm

reception at Madrid. No representations could induce the inhabitants of the capital or the Castiles to do anything ; and even in Catalonia and Valencia, where his cause was more popular, the exertions of the people were so languid that, when he did approach the capital, Charles, instead of the army thirty thousand strong, which was expected, made his appearance at Guadaluara with only four thousand foot and one thousand horse. In this little camp discord and jealousies broke out with such violence that Lord Peterborough, whose military talents were alone equal to the crisis, resigned his command, and accepted a minor commission to levy troops for the service of the Duke of Savoy. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Andalusia and the two Castiles were zealous for the Bourbon cause, and raised forces for them with great alacrity ; and the Duke of Berwick, who commanded them, displayed in the conduct of the war those great abilities which he and his uncle Marlborough had inherited, each through the mother, from their common ancestor, Sir Francis Drake. The result was what might have been expected when jealousy and disunion prevailed on one side, and vigour and unanimity characterised the other. Lord Galway was forced to evacuate Madrid, and retire towards the Portuguese frontier ; Charles fell back to the borders of Valencia ; and Berwick, having regained Madrid, and restored the communication with Andalusia, was able to open the next campaign in the most advantageous circumstances, in a central position, between two separate and disunited enemies.¹

Affairs wore an equally unpromising aspect in the end of the campaign on the Upper Rhine. The talents of Marshal Villars were there more than a match for the

¹ Hist. Mil.
vi. Coxe,
iii. 29-37.

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68.
Untoward
state of
affairs on
the Upper
Rhine.

Margrave of Baden, to whom he was opposed, who was sinking under a mortal disease, which brought him to an untimely end in the beginning of January 1707. He was at the head of seventy battalions, and one hundred and ten squadrons, mustering thirty-five thousand combatants—in so surprising a manner had the forces of France sprung up and multiplied with the necessities of circumstances in this gigantic war. This force was greatly superior to that of the Margrave of Baden, in consequence of which the fortress of Haguenuau, with a garrison of three thousand men, was taken by Villars early in the campaign. But the French marshal was soon after weakened by large draughts to reinforce the army of Villeroy, defeated by Marlborough, and that of Italy, threatened by Eugene, and this tide of success was soon arrested. The Imperialists, however, were not less weakened by the large draughts made by the Emperor, to enable him to make head against the Hungarian insurgents, who still continued their interminable hostilities, and threatened Vienna itself by the incursions of their armed partisans. Thus the war languished, and degenerated into a campaign of marches and positions on the Upper Rhine, in which, however, the French had so much the advantage that it was evident that, if Villars was considerably reinforced, the affairs of the Imperialists would speedily become desperate in that quarter.¹

¹ Hist. Mil.
vi. 415-435.
Coxe, iii.
23, 24.

69.
Immense
difficulties
of Marlbo-
rough's cor-
respondence
in these
campaigns.

No adequate idea can be formed of the greatness of Marlborough's capacity, or the overwhelming load of cares with which he was oppressed, if the other contests which, in addition to his own, he was obliged to carry on, are not taken into consideration. It was not merely his own campaigns, often of the most active kind, which he was called on to direct ; he was at the same time charged

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with the almost entire direction of those in every other quarter, and constantly appealed to whenever a difficulty occurred. At the very moment when his blood was heated by combat, and he was obliged to be ten or twelve hours a-day on horseback with his own troops, he was compelled to steal half the night to carry on his multiplied correspondence with the Allied generals or cabinets in every part of Europe. Such was the weight of his authority, the avidity for his direction, that not only was he intrusted with the general design of every campaign, alike in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Flanders, but the details of their execution were constantly submitted to him ; and, what was much more vexatious, he was continually called on to adjust by his authority, or heal by his urbanity, the quarrels of the generals, and discord of the cabinets to whom their direction was intrusted. His correspondence affords ample evidence of this. Appeals were made to Marlborough at every time, and from every side : from the Imperial ministers against the inactivity of the Margrave of Baden ; from the Margrave against the imbecility of the Imperial cabinet ; from Lord Peterborough against the jealousy and tardiness of the Spaniards at the court of the Archduke Charles ; from them against the irritability and eccentricity of the English general ; from the Hungarian insurgents against the exactions and cruelty of the Imperial government ; from them against the restless and rebellious spirit with which the Magyars in every age have been animated.

The confidence universally reposed, not only in his wisdom and justice, but in his conciliatory manners and irresistible address, was the cause of this extraordinary load of important cares with which, in addition to the direction of his own army, he was daily over-

70.

Universal
confidence
in his wis-
dom and
probity.

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1706.

whelmed. From Eugene alone he was assailed by no appeals, except for such addition to his forces as might put him in a condition to measure his strength with the enemy. Their ideas were so identical, their minds so entirely cast in the same mould, their military knowledge and capacity so much alike, that it invariably happened that what the one of his own accord *did*, was precisely what the other of his own accord would *have recommended*. Nor was it enough that foreign affairs of such overwhelming magnitude daily oppressed the English general ; he had in addition the divisions of the cabinet at home to heal, and the deadly animosity of faction, increasing with every triumph which he won, to appease. No warrior of modern times, not even excepting Wellington, had such a mass of affairs, both civil and military, to conduct at the same time, and none ever got through them with such consummate ability. The correspondence of the Emperor Napoleon alone, since the days of Cæsar, will bear a comparison with it ; but although nothing could exceed the energy and capacity of the French Emperor, there was this difference, and it was a vital one, between his position and that of Marlborough—Napoleon commanded, after he attained to greatness, everywhere as a master : he directed his generals with equal authority on the Danube and the Tagus, and dictated to cabinets at Vienna or St Petersburg nearly as effectively as at St Cloud ; but Marlborough had not even the uncontrolled direction of his own army, and beyond it had no influence but what had been extorted by exploits or won by condescension.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
24-25.

But if Marlborough's difficulties as the real head of the Grand Alliance were great, those of Louis XIV. were still greater ; and the discouragement, both at

Versailles and over all France, had now become such that it had become next to impossible any longer to continue the contest. The successes on the Upper Rhine, the balanced issue of the campaign in Spain, afforded no adequate compensation for the disasters in Piedmont and Flanders :—by the first, Italy had been lost ; by the second, France itself was menaced. The recovery of the Flemish fortresses, by the consequences of the battle of Ramilies, had deprived the monarchy of the immense advantage, both for offensive and defensive operations, which it had hitherto enjoyed during the war. It had done more ; it had rolled it over to the enemy. Securely based on Ostend, Dendermonde, Ghent, and Ath, the confederates were in a condition to open the next campaign by the siege of Mons, Tournay, Lisle, and the frontier fortresses of France, after the reduction of which nothing remained capable of arresting their march to Paris. In Flanders they had taken, indeed, the bull by the horns ; but, having seized them, they had got the entire command of the animal. France, it was true, had made astonishing efforts, unparalleled in this or any other war. But its strength appeared to be now exhausted : the very magnitude of its exertions precluded their continuance. After five years of continued effort, deeply chequered by disaster, Louis XIV. found himself stript of all his conquests, shorn of his external influence, and compelled to maintain at once, on the frontiers of Germany, Flanders, Spain, and Italy, a contest from his own resources with the forces of all Europe. The treasury was exhausted ; the people, oppressed with taxes, and stript of their sons to feed the ranks of war, loudly clamoured for peace ; in vain had a forced paper currency been tried to restore the public credit ; and the

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71.

Terror at
the court of
Louis XIV.

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soldiers, discouraged by repeated defeats, and dissatisfied with their commanders, no longer approached the enemy but with a secret presentiment of disaster. Paris was in the utmost consternation. Every family of distinction mourned a son lost, or a prisoner in the hands of the enemy ; the multitude of mourning dresses threw a gloom over the public fêtes, and caused them to be discontinued. Though calm in appearance, as all men of powerful minds are in disaster, Louis was profoundly affected. His haughty spirit, long accustomed to prosperity, supported with difficulty the weight of adversity ; the war, and all its concerns, was a forbidden subject at court ; a melancholy gloom pervaded the halls of Versailles ; and frequent bleedings of the monarch himself attested both the violence of his internal agitation, and the dread which his physicians entertained of still greater dangers.¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
217.

72.
His over-
tures for
peace,
Nov. 1706.

Overcome by so many calamities, the firm spirit of Louis was at length shaken, and he was prevailed on to sue for peace. His proposals were addressed to the States-General—with whom he entertained a secret hope of being able to conclude a separate accommodation—by the Marquis Allegré, and in letters by the Elector of Bavaria to the Duke of Marlborough and Dutch commander-in-chief, and their commissioners with the army. With honourable fidelity to their engagements, however, the Dutch government immediately communicated them to their Allies, and a congress on the subject was held of all the Allied ministers at the Hague on the 29th of November. The Elector observed in his letter to Marlborough, “ His Most Christian Majesty having observed with concern that all attempts hitherto made by private channels to bring about an accommodation

have failed of effect, and been regarded as attempts to disunite the Allies, has resolved to proceed in the most public manner, and, renouncing all secret negotiations, to propose general conferences, which may lead to the re-establishment of the peace of Europe." Marlborough replied: "Her Majesty, to whom I have communicated your letter, commands me to assure your Electoral Highness that she learns with pleasure the pacific intentions of the King; that if she has hitherto resolved to continue the war, it was only in the hope that it might lead to the conclusion of a solid and durable peace; and that nothing would gratify her so much as to be able, in concert with her Allies, to arrive at an accommodation, which might relieve her from the necessity of being obliged to resume her arms at no distant interval. But while Her Majesty is ready to concur with them in everything which is just and reasonable, she is equally determined to enter into no separate negotiation; and she does not wish to disguise her opinion that the proposed opening of general conferences, without a distinct previous announcement on the part of His Most Christian Majesty of the basis on which they are to proceed, is not likely to lead to the desired result; and in this opinion the States-General concur."¹

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¹ Elector of Bavaria to Marlborough, Oct. 21, 1706; and Marlborough to him, Nov. 20, 1706. Hist. de Marl. ii. 220-224.

The reason of this proposal of general conferences on the part of the French sovereign, and the declination of them, unless a basis was previously agreed on, by Marlborough and the British government, was this. All men are not Marlboroughs or Eugenes: the really great alone can witness success without envy, or achieve it without selfishness. In the base herd of ignoble men who profited by the efforts of these great leaders, the malignant passions were rapidly gaining strength by the

73.
Reasons of Marlborough's conduct.

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very magnitude of the triumphs. The removal of danger was producing its usual effect of reviving jealousy among the Allies. Conquest was spreading its invariable discord by inciting cupidity in the distribution of its fruits. The confederates exhibited an instance of the inherent weakness so often observed in alliances, and which Wellington, in the bitterness of his heart, once said also characterised the English army—that of being “equally liable to be dissolved by victory or defeat.” It was hard to say whether France or the Allies were most endangered by the victories of Ramilies and Turin, so numerous and serious were the jealousies which immediately broke out among them. No sooner had Eugene’s success delivered the Austrian government from all apprehensions in Italy, and reinstated Victor Amadeus on the throne which he was on the point of losing, than the old animosity between their cabinets and generals broke out to such a degree that it became next to impossible to get them to agree to any joint measures; and it required all the address of Marlborough to prevent the Alliance from being dissolved by the very completeness of its success.¹

¹ Coxe, ii.
385-394.

74.
Office of the
government
of the Ne-
therlands
declined by
Marlbo-
rough.

Nor were these divisions confined to Italy. In Flanders also they had appeared soon after the battle of Ramilies, when the Emperor Joseph, on the part of the King of Spain, to whom it pertained, as a natural mark of gratitude to the general who had delivered his people from their oppressors, as well as from a regard to his own interests, appointed Marlborough to the general command as viceroy of the Netherlands. The English general was highly gratified by this mark of confidence and gratitude; and the appointment was cordially approved of by Queen Anne and the English cabinet, who, without hesitation, authorised Marlborough to

accept the proffered dignity. But the Dutch, who had already begun to conceive projects of ambition by an accession of territory to themselves on the side of Flanders, evinced such dislike to this appointment, as tending to throw the administration of the Netherlands entirely into the hands of the English and Austrians, that Marlborough had the magnanimity to solicit permission to decline an honour which threatened to breed disunion in the Alliance.* This conduct was as disinterested as it was patriotic; for the emoluments of the government, thus refused from a desire for the public good, were no less than £60,000 a-year.¹†

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¹ Coxe, ii.
390-403.

Although, however, Marlborough thus renounced this

* "This appointment by the Emperor has given some uneasiness in Holland, by thinking that the Emperor has a mind to put the power in this country into the Queen's hands, in order that they may have nothing to do with it. If I should find the same thing by the Pensionary, and that nothing can cure this jealousy but my desiring to be excused from accepting this commission, I hope the Queen will allow of it; for the advantage and honour I have by this commission is *very insignificant in comparison of the fatal consequences that might be if it should cause a jealousy between the two nations*. And though the appointments of this government are *sixty thousand pounds a-year*, I shall with pleasure excuse myself, since I am convinced it is for her service, if the States should not make it their request, which they are very far from doing."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 12, 1706; COXE, iii. 391-393. "I send you copies of what I have received from Vienna, and I write this to beg of you to do me the justice to believe firmly that I shall take no step in this matter but what shall be by the advice of the States; for I prefer infinitely their friendship before any interest of my own; for I thank God and the Queen I have no need or desire of being richer, but have a very great ambition of doing everything that can be for the public good; and as for the frontier, which is absolutely necessary for your security, you know my opinion of it."—*Marlborough to the Pensionary Heinsius*, July 3, 1706; *Ibid.* iii. 392.

† "Mr Hope has probably written to your High Mightinesses that, with the permission of the Queen, I am firmly resolved not to charge myself in any manner with the commission with which His Most Catholic Majesty has been pleased to honour me. This ought to convince their High Mightinesses how much I have their interest and peculiar satisfaction at heart, as well as that of the common cause."—*Marlborough to the States-General*, July 10, 1706; COXE, ii. 395.

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75.
Jealousies
of the
Dutch, and
continued
disinterest-
edness of
Marlbo-
rough.

splendid appointment, the court of Vienna were not equally tractable. It evinced the utmost jealousy at the no longer disguised desire of the Dutch to gain an accession of territory, and the barrier of which they were so passionately desirous, at the expense of the Austrian Netherlands. The project also got wind, and the Catholic inhabitants of Brabant, whom difference of religion and old-established national rivalry had long alienated from the Dutch, were so much alarmed at the prospect of being transferred to their hated Protestant neighbours, that the proposal at once cooled their ardour in the cause of the Alliance, and went far to sow the seeds of irrepressible dissension among them. The Emperor, therefore, again pressed the appointment on Marlborough; but from the same lofty motives he continued to decline, professing a willingness, at the same time, to give the Emperor privately every assistance in his power in the exercise of the new government, so that the Emperor was obliged to give a reluctant consent. Notwithstanding this refusal, the jealousy of the Dutch was such that, on the revival of a report that the appointment had been actually conferred on the Duke of Marlborough, they were thrown into such a ferment that in the public congress the Pensionary could not avoid exclaiming in the presence of the English ambassador, "*Mon Dieu ! est-il possible qu'on voudrait faire ce pas sans nôtre participation ?*" The English government, on the other hand, made no attempt to conceal their indignation at the selfish conduct of the Dutch in thus opposing a deserved reward to the hero who had saved them from so much danger, and a measure calculated to be of such essential service to the general interests of the Alliance,¹ and did not scruple to

¹ Mr Step-
ney to Marl-
borough,
January 4,
1707.
Coxe, ii.
497.

ascribe it to the secret influence of the French party, which might be expected to produce still more disastrous results in future times.*

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The French government were soon informed of this jealousy, and of the open desire of the Dutch for an accession of territory on the side of Flanders, at the expense of Austria; and they took advantage of it, early in the summer of 1706, to open a secret negotiation with the States-General for the conclusion of a separate peace with that republic. The basis of this accommodation was to be a renunciation by the Duke of Anjou of his claim to the crown of Spain, upon receiving an equivalent in Italy: he offered to recognise Anne as Queen of England, and professed the utmost readiness to secure for the Dutch, *at the expense of Austria*, that barrier in the Netherlands to which he conceived them to be so well entitled. These proposals elated the Dutch government to such a degree that they began to take a high hand, and assume a dictatorial tone at the Hague; and it was the secret belief that they would, if matters came to extremities, be supported by France in this exorbitant demand for a slice of Austria, that made them resist so strenuously the government of the Low Countries being placed in such firm and vigorous hands as those of Marlborough.

76.
Opening of
a separate
secret nego-
tiation be-
tween the
Dutch and
the French.

* "I have received yours of the 6th July, and I must not disown to you that it both surprised and troubled me very much. It is amazing that, after so much done for their advantage, and even for their safety, the States can have been capable of such behaviour. Those of the French faction must have seen their advantage upon this occasion to fill them with jealousy of your having, and consequently of England's having, too much power; and if this be at the bottom, we shall soon see that argument made use of on other occasions as well as this. But your prudence and good temper will, I trust, get the better of all this folly and perverseness."—*Godolphin to Marlborough*, July 4 15, 1706; COXE. ii. 394.

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Matters had, therefore, come to such a pass in October and November 1706, that Godolphin regarded the state of affairs as desperate, and thought that the Alliance was on the point of being dissolved.* It was the knowledge he possessed of these secret intrigues and open jealousies which made Marlborough exert himself to prevent any conferences being opened until this basis was first admitted by France, well knowing that they would give an entrance to the point of the wedge which the skill of Louis and the address of his ministers would soon drive home, to the entire splitting asunder of the Grand Alliance. The Dutch now openly aspired not merely to obtaining a barrier for themselves in the Netherlands, but to the complete sovereignty and possession of that noble country, which of right appertained to Austria. Thus was Marlborough's usual winter campaign with the confederates rendered more difficult on this than it had been on any preceding occasion ; for he had now to contend with the consequences of his own success, and allay the jealousies, and stifle the cupidity which had sprung up in the prospect of that magnificent spoil which he himself had laid at the feet of the Allies.¹

¹ Coxe, ii.
393-399.

77.
Marlbo-
rough's ad-
dress ob-
tains a re-
newal of the
Alliance.

But in this dangerous crisis, Marlborough's great diplomatic ability, consummate address, and thorough devotion to the common good, stood him in as good stead as his military talents had done him in the preceding campaign with Villeroi and Vendôme. In the beginning of November he repaired to the Hague, and

* " Lord Somers has shown me a long letter which he has had from the Pensionary, very intent upon settling the barrier. The inclinations of the Dutch are so violent and plain, that I am of opinion nothing will be able to prevent their taking effect but our being as plain with them upon the same subject, and threatening to publish to the whole world the terms for which they solicit."—*Lord Godolphin to Marlborough*, Oct. 24, 1706 ; COXE, iii. 74.

though he found the Dutch, in the first instance, so extravagant in their ideas of the barrier they were to obtain, that he despaired of effecting any settlement of the differences between them and the Emperor ;* yet he at length succeeded, though with very great difficulty, in appeasing, for the time, the jealousies between them and the cabinet of Vienna, and also in obtaining a public renewal of the Alliance for the prosecution of the war. The delicate and disputed matter of the government of the Austrian Low Countries was adjusted by a compromise, in virtue of which the government was to be in reality shared by England and Holland, although, to gratify the natives, it was conducted in the name and under the authority of Charles III., King of Spain. The publication of this treaty diffused the utmost satisfaction among the ministers of the Allied powers assembled at the Hague ; and this was further increased by a negotiation which had been pending for some months between Marlborough and the Elector of Bavaria, for a separate treaty with that prince, who had become disgusted with the French Alliance, though this negotiation was subsequently broken off. The proposals for conferences by Louis came to nothing, as he would not specify any basis on which it should be rested. But all Marlborough's efforts failed to accomplish any adjustment of the disputed matter of the barrier on which the Dutch

* " My inclinations will lead me to stay as little as possible at the Hague, though the Pensionary tells me I must stay to finish the succession treaty and their barrier, which, should I stay the whole winter, I am very confident would not be brought to perfection. For they are of so many minds, and are all so very extravagant about their barrier, that I despair of doing anything good till they are more reasonable, which they will not be till they see that they have it not in their power to dispose of the whole Low Countries at their will and pleasure, in which the French flatter them."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Oct. 29, 1706 ; COXE, iii. 79.

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¹ Coxe, ii.
398-401;
and iii.
17-52.

were so obstinately set ; and even his noble and disinterested declining of the government of the Netherlands failed in giving him influence enough to overcome their selfish thirst for aggrandisement. Finding them equally unreasonable and intractable on that subject, he deemed himself fortunate when he obtained the adjourning of the question, by the consent of all concerned, till the conclusion of a general peace.¹ *

78.
His return
to England,
and splendid
reception
there.

After the adjustment of this delicate and perilous negotiation, Marlborough returned to England, where he was received with transports of exultation by all classes. He was conducted in one of the royal carriages, amidst a splendid procession of all the nobility of the kingdom, to Temple Bar, where he was received by the city authorities, who feasted him in the most magnificent manner at Vintners' Hall. Thanks were voted to him by both Houses of Parliament ; and when he took his seat in the House of Peers, the Lord Keeper addressed him in these just and appropriate terms :—" What your Grace has performed in this last campaign has far exceeded all hopes, even of such as were most affectionate and partial to their country's interest and glory. The advantages you have gained against the enemy are of such a nature, so conspicuous in themselves, so un-

* "I was in hopes that my declining the honour the King of Spain had done me would have given me so much power with the States as that I might be able to hinder them from doing themselves and the common cause very great hurt. But such is their temper that, when they have misfortunes, they are desirous of peace upon any terms ; and when, by the blessing of God, they have success, they are for turning it to their own advantage, without any consideration how it may be liked by their friends and allies. You will see by the enclosed letter I have this day writ to the Pensioner, that, if they cannot be brought to change their resolution of the 19th ult., they will create so great a jealousy in this country that they shall be under the government of the Dutch, that it would turn very much to the advantage of the French."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 14 25, 1706 ; COXE, ii. 398.

doubtedly owing to your courage and conduct, so sensibly and universally beneficial to the whole confederacy, that to attempt to adorn them with the colouring of words would be vain and inexcusable. Therefore I decline it, the rather because I should certainly offend that great modesty which alone can and does add lustre to your actions, and which in your Grace's example has successfully withstood as great trials as that virtue has met with in any instance whatsoever." The House of Commons passed a similar resolution ; and, the better to testify the national gratitude, an annuity of £5000 a-year, charged upon the Post Office, was settled upon the Duke and Duchess, and their descendants, male or female ; and his dukedom, which stood limited to heirs-male, was extended also to heirs-female, "in order," as it was finely expressed, "that England might never be without a title which might recall the remembrance of so much glory."¹

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¹ Cox, iii.
134-144.

So much glory, however, produced its usual effect in engendering jealousy in little minds. The Whigs had grown envious of that illustrious pillar of their party ; they were tired of hearing him called the Just. Both Godolphin and Marlborough became the objects of excessive jealousy to their own party ; and this, combined with the rancour of the Tories, who could never forgive his desertion of his early patron, the Duke of York, had wellnigh proved fatal to him when at the very zenith of his usefulness and popularity. Intrigue was rife at St James's. Serious causes of division were not wanting, nor topics on which faction could raise a clamour, and under which selfishness could conceal its designs. Matters were approaching a crisis between the old Tories and the party which had introduced the

79.
Jealousy
against him
arises among
both the
Whigs and
Tories, but
he prevails
at court.

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new dynasty. The Act of Union with Scotland, in promoting which Marlborough took a very active part, both consolidated the power of Great Britain, and was of great eventual service to both ends of the island, and established the Protestant succession in both kingdoms.* Parties were strangely intermixed and disjointed. Some of the moderate Tories were in power ; many ambitious Whigs were out of it. Neither party stood on great public principles,—a sure sign of instability in the national councils. Harley's intrigues had become serious, and the prime-minister, Godolphin, had threatened to resign. The Duchess of Marlborough's influence at court had visibly declined ; she had even been a long time without seeing her Majesty. In this alarming juncture of domestic affairs, the presence of Marlborough produced its usual pacifying and benign influence. In a long interview which he had with the Queen on his first private audience, he settled all differences ; Godolphin was persuaded to withdraw his resignation ; the cabinet was reconstructed on a new and harmonious basis ; Harley and Bolingbroke were the only Tories of any note who remained in power ; and these new perils to the prosecution of the war, and the cause of European independence, were removed.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
112-124.

30.
Death and
character
of Prince
Louis of
Baden.

The beginning of the year 1707 witnessed the expiry of a distinguished warrior, at first a rival of Marlborough, but latterly eclipsed by his glory—Prince Louis of Baden, who died at Rastadt on the 4th January 1707. He was born at Paris on the 8th April 1655,

* “Madam, the truth is, that the heads of one party have declared against you and your government, as far as it is possible without going into open rebellion. Now, should your Majesty disoblige the others, how is it possible to obtain near five millions for carrying on the war, without which all is undone.”—*Marlborough to Queen Anne*, October 24, 1706 ; COXE, iii. 118.

so that he was only in his fifty-first year when he was cut off. His godfather was Louis XIV., and his father had espoused, in 1653, Louisa Christina, sister of the father of Prince Eugene, under whom the young Prince of Baden made his first campaign. Nature had endowed him with the qualities fitted to render him a great captain. Cool and determined in danger, he was cautious and circumspect in council ; though averse to hazardous enterprises before they were commenced, he warmed with the advent of danger, and none carried them into execution with greater *sang froid* and intrepidity. His early career was extremely promising, and the wars in Hungary against the Turks present several brilliant instances of his heroism and conduct. The storming of the castles of the Five Churches, and of Caposwar, laid the foundation of his reputation, which was soon greatly enhanced by the defeat of fifteen thousand Turks, who were marching to the relief of Belgrade, by five thousand men under his orders. But the keystone was put in the arch of his fame by the defeat of forty thousand Turks near Nissa, by fifteen thousand men, of whom he had the command, and the capture of the strong fortress of Widdin in four days. The reputation thus acquired in war with the Orientals was not belied in after times, and Europe beheld with admiration his forcing the Ottoman lines between Peterwardin and Salankemen in 1691, when the Grand Vizier and eighteen thousand men were slain, an exploit which put him in the same rank with Eugene, the conqueror of Zinta. But his exploits in the campaigns of Western Europe did not equal these achievements against the Infidels. Placed at the head of the army of the Empire in Germany, at the breaking out of the War of the Succession, he experienced such luke-

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warm support from the German princes, and received so little succour from the Imperial government, which was at that period hard pressed by the insurrection in Hungary, that he was reduced to a defensive war, which, although ably conducted, added not to his reputation. He became jealous of Marlborough, when the victory of Blenheim outshone his exploits; and his temper, which was naturally violent, became so soured by the subsequent crosses and want of support he experienced from the Imperial government, that shortly before his death he had resigned the command of their army in Germany, with the melancholy words, "Nothing now remains to a man of honour, but to retire into a private station."¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
247, 248.

81.
Great error
in the sub-
sequent po-
licy of Eng-
land.

Marlborough's services to England, and the interests of European freedom in this campaign, recall one mournful feeling to the British annalist. All that he had won for his country—all that Wellington, with still greater difficulty, and amidst yet brighter glories, regained for it—has been lost. It has been lost, too, not by the enemies of the nation, but by itself; not by an opposite faction, but by the very party over whom his own great exploits had shed such imperishable lustre; not amidst national humiliation, but at the height of national glory; not in faithfully defending, but in basely partitioning an ally. Antwerp, the first-fruits of Ramilies—Antwerp, the last reward of Waterloo—Antwerp, to hold which against England Napoleon lost his crown, has been abandoned to France.* An English fleet has combined with a French army to tear from Holland the barrier of Dutch independence, and the key to the Low Countries. The barrier so passion-

* "If I could have made up my mind to give up Antwerp, I might have concluded peace at Chatillon."—*Napoleon* in *LAS CASES*.

ately sought by the Dutch has been wrested from them, and wrested from them by British hands ; a revolutionary power has been placed on the throne of Belgium, the theatre of Ramilies and Malplaquet, of Oudenarde and Waterloo. Flanders, instead of the outwork of Europe against France, has become the outwork of France against Europe. The tricolor flag waves in sight of Bergen-op-Zoom ; within a month after the first European war, the whole coast from Bayonne to the Texel will be arrayed against Britain ! and the fleet which is to menace the independence of England will have its right wing under the cannon of the citadel of Antwerp, its centre in the basins of Cherbourg, and its left in the harbour of Brest. Such is the way in which empires are ruined by the blindness of faction. It is in moments of domestic convulsion that irrevocable and fatal mistakes in policy are committed by nations ; for it is then that the national are absorbed in the social passions, and durable public interests are forgotten in passing party contentions.

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CHAPTER V.

CAMPAIGN OF 1707.—FAILURE BEFORE TOULON.—BATTLE OF ALMANZA.—
COMMENCEMENT OF THE INTRIGUES AGAINST MARLBOROUGH.

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1.
Great disasters experienced by France in the preceding campaign.

THE campaign of 1707 opened under auspices very different to the Allies from any which had preceded it; and if it had been improved by their governments, as it might have been, the war would have been ended in that year. Blenheim had saved Germany, Ramilies had delivered Brabant. The power of the Grand Monarque no longer made Europe tremble. The immense advantage which he had gained in the outset of the contest, by the declaration of the governor of Flanders for the cause of the Bourbons, and the consequent transference of the Flemish fortresses into his hands, had been lost. It was more than lost—it had been won to the enemy. Brussels, Antwerp, Menin, Ath, Ostend, Ghent, Dendermonde, Louvain, now acknowledged the Archduke Charles for their sovereign; the States of Brabant had sent in their adhesion to the Grand Alliance. Italy had been lost as rapidly as it had been won; the blow struck by Marlborough at Ramilies had been re-echoed at Turin; and Eugene had expelled the French arms from Piedmont as effectually as Marlborough had from Flanders. The success of the French and Allies was balanced in Spain. If the Bourbon prince still held his court at Madrid, he

had lately been obliged to evacuate that capital; Barcelona was the headquarters of a rival prince, and from Catalonia and Portugal the tottering throne at Madrid was alike menaced. Reduced on all sides to his own resources, wakened from his dream of foreign conquests, Louis XIV. now sought only to defend his own frontier; and the arms which had formerly reached the gates of Amsterdam, and recently carried terror into the centre of Germany, were now reduced to a painful defensive on the Scheldt and the Rhine.

These great advantages would, in all probability, notwithstanding the usual supineness and divisions of the Allied powers, have insured them the most signal success in the next campaign, had not their efforts in Spain been counteracted by the great military abilities of Marlborough's nephew, the Duke of Berwick, and their attention in Germany early arrested, and their efforts paralysed, by a new and formidable actor on the theatre of affairs. This was no less a man than CHARLES XII., KING OF SWEDEN; who, after having defeated the coalition which the northern sovereigns, little aware of the character of the man with whom they had to deal, had formed for his destruction, had dictated peace to Denmark at Copenhagen, dethroned the King of Poland, and wellnigh overturned the empire of Russia by the extraordinary and almost fabulous victory gained at Narva, in Livonia, over sixty thousand Muscovites. He had now planted his victorious standards in the centre of Germany, and at the head of an army of fifty thousand strong, and hitherto invincible, had stationed himself at Dresden. There he had become the arbiter of Europe, and in a position to threaten the destruction of either of

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2.

Appearance
of Charles
XII. of
Sweden in
Germany.

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3.
His charac-
ter.

the parties engaged in the contest on the Rhine against whom he chose to direct his hostility.

This extraordinary man approached closer than any warrior of modern times to the great men of antiquity. More nearly than even Napoleon, he realised the heroes of Plutarch. A Stoic in pacific, he was a Cæsar in military life. He had all the virtues, and a considerable share of the barbarism, of antiquity. Achilles did not surpass him in the thirst for warlike renown, nor Hannibal in the perseverance of his character and the fruitfulness of his resources : like Alexander, he would have wept because a world did not remain to conquer. Almost unconquerable by fatigue, resolute in determination, and a lion in heart, he knew no fear but that of his glory being tarnished. Endowed by nature with a dauntless soul, a constitution of iron, he was capable of undergoing a greater amount of exertion than any of his soldiers. At the siege of Stralsund, when some of his officers were sinking under the exhaustion of protracted watching, he desired them to retire to rest, and himself took their place. Outstripping his followers in speed, at one time he rode across Germany, almost alone, in an incredibly short space of time : at another, he defended himself for days together, at the head of a handful of attendants, in a barricaded house, against twenty thousand Turks. Wrapt up in the passion for fame, he was insensible to the inferior desires which usually rouse or mislead mankind. Wine had no attractions, women no seductions for him ; he had no predilection either for female charms or society ; he was indifferent to personal comforts or accommodations ; his fare was as simple, his dress as plain, his lodging as rude, as those of the meanest of his followers. To one end alone his atten-

tion was exclusively directed, on one acquisition alone his heart was set. Glory, military glory, was the ceaseless object of his ambition ; all lesser desires were concentrated in this ruling passion ; for this he lived, for this he died.

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“ A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire ;
O'er love, o'er fear extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain ;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field ;
Behold surrounding kings their pow'rs combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign ;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain ;
' Think nothing gain'd,' he cries, ' till nought remain :
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.' ” *

That his military abilities were of the very highest order, may be judged of by the fact that, with the resources of the poor monarchy of Sweden, at that period containing less than two millions of inhabitants, he long arrested the efforts of a coalition composed of Russia, Denmark, and Poland, headed by the vast capacity and persevering energy of Peter the Great, and backed by not less than forty millions of subjects under its various sovereigns. Nor let it be said that these nations were rude in the military art, and unfit to contend in the field with the descendants of the followers of Gustavus Adolphus. The Danes are the near neighbours and old enemies of the Swedes ; their equals in population, discipline, and warlike resources. Thirty years had not elapsed since the Poles had delivered Europe from Mussulman bondage by the glorious victory of Vienna, gained under John Sobieski over two hundred

4.
His great
military
abilities.

* JOHNSON'S *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

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thousand Turks. The world has since had too much reason to know what are the military resources of Russia, against which all the power of Western Europe, in recent times, has been so signally shattered ; and though the soldiers of Peter the Great were very different in point of discipline from those that repelled the legions of Napoleon, yet their native courage was the same, and they were directed by an energy and perseverance, on the part of the Czar, which never has been exceeded in warlike annals. What, then, must have been the capacity of the sovereign who, with the resources of a monarchy not equalling those of Scotland at this time, could gain such extraordinary success over so powerful a coalition, from the mere force of military ability, indefatigable energy, and heroic determination !

5.
His faults,
rashness,
and cruelty.

Charles, however, had many faults. He was proud, overbearing, and self-willed. Like all men of powerful original genius, he was confident in his own opinion, and took counsel from none ; but, unfortunately, he often forgot also to take counsel from himself. He did not always weigh the objections against his designs with sufficient calmness to give them fair play, or allow his heroic followers a practical opportunity of crowning his enterprises with success. He had so often succeeded against desperate and apparently hopeless odds that he thought himself invincible, and rushed headlong into the most dreadful perils, with no other preparation to ward them off but his own calmness in danger, his inexhaustible fecundity of resources, and the undaunted courage, as well as patience of fatigue and privation, with which he had inspired his followers. It is surprising, however, how often he was extricated from his difficulties by such means. Even in his last expedition

against Russia, which terminated in the disaster of Pultowa, he would, to all appearance, have been successful, had the Tartar chief, Mazeppa, proved faithful to his engagement. Like Hannibal, his heroic qualities had inspired a multifarious army—*colluries omnium gentium*—with one homogeneous spirit, and rendered them subject to his discipline, faithful to his standard, obedient to his will. But in some particulars his private character was still more exceptionable, for it was stained by the vices as well as adorned with the virtues of the savage disposition. Like his great predecessor on the theatre of glory, Alexander the Great, though not habitually cruel, he was stern, vindictive, and implacable; his temper was irritable, his anger violent. He was prodigal of the blood, reckless of the fortunes, of his subjects; and supposing in all the same thirst for renown which he felt in himself, he called upon them for sacrifices, both in men and money, far beyond what either their strength could bear or their patience tolerate. The resistance he met with in his demands soured his temper and rendered it vindictive, and his government was sullied by acts of atrocious barbarity, at which humanity shudders, and which must ever leave an indelible blot on his memory.

Louis XIV., in his distress, was naturally anxious to gain the support of an ally so powerful as the Swedish monarch, who was now at Dresden at the head of fifty-three thousand veteran soldiers, ready to fall on the rear of Marlborough's army, then threatening the defensive barrier of France in the Low Countries. Every effort, accordingly, was made to gain Charles over to the French interest. The ancient alliance of France with Sweden, their mutual cause of complaint against the Emperor, the glories of Gustavus Adolphus and the Thirty Years'

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6.

Efforts of
Louis XIV.
to win him
to his side.

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War, in which their armies had fought side by side, were held forth to dazzle his imagination or convince his judgment. The Swedish monarch appeared ready to yield to these efforts. He brought forward various real or imaginary grounds of complaint against the German powers, for infractions of the constitution of the Empire, of which he put himself forth as the guarantee, in the capacity of heir to the crown and fame of Gustavus Adolphus, and like him the bulwark of the Protestant faith. He demanded reparation also from Austria for sundry insults alleged to have been offered to the Swedish crown or subjects. These various subjects of complaint were sedulously inflamed by the French agents; and the weight of their arguments was not a little increased by the knowledge of the fact that they were authorised to offer to Count Piper, the prime-minister of Charles, 300,000 livres (£12,000) to quicken his movements in favour of the cabinet of Versailles, besides bribes in proportion to the subordinate ministers of the court of Sweden.¹

¹ Instructions pour le Sieur Recoux. Cardonell Papers, 137-139. Coxe, iii. 156.

7.
Measures of Marlborough to counteract his efforts.

Marlborough very naturally felt extremely uneasy at this negotiation, which he soon discovered by secret information, as well as from the undisguised reluctance of the German powers to furnish the contingents which they were bound to supply for the ensuing campaign. Indeed, it could hardly be expected that the Northern powers in the Empire should send their chief disposable forces to swell Marlborough's army beyond the Rhine, when so warlike a monarch, at the head of fifty thousand men, was in the centre of the Empire, with his intentions as yet undeclared, and exposed to the influence of every imaginable seduction. General Grumbkow, an adroit and intelligent diplomatist, who had been sent by the

King of Prussia on a mission to the Allied headquarters, was accordingly despatched to Dresden, to endeavour to ascertain the real intentions of the Swedish monarch. He was not long of discovering that Charles had assumed an angry tone towards the confederates only in order to extract favourable terms of accommodation from them, and that Muscovy was the real object on which the King's heart was set. The despatches which the general transmitted to Marlborough convey a curious and highly interesting picture of Charles and the Swedish court and army at this important juncture.^{1*} The negotiation

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¹ Coxe, iii.
159-161.

* "Count Piper, aide-de-camp to Charles XII., said, 'We made war on Poland only to subsist; our design in Saxony is only to terminate the war; but for the Muscovite, he shall pay *les pots cassés*, and we will treat the Czar in a manner which posterity will hardly believe.' I secretly wished that already he was in the heart of Muscovy. After dinner he conveyed me to headquarters, and introduced me to his Majesty. He asked me whence I came, and where I had served. I replied, and mentioned my good fortune in having served three campaigns under your Highness. He questioned me much, particularly concerning your Highness and the English troops; and you may readily believe that I delineated my hero in the most lively and natural colours. Among other particulars, he asked me if your Highness yourself led the troops to the charge. I replied, that, as all the troops were animated with the same ardour for fighting, that was not necessary; but that you were everywhere, and always in the hottest of the action, and gave your orders with that coolness which excites general admiration. I then related to him that you had been thrown from your horse, the death of your aide-de-camp Borefield, and many other things. He took great pleasure in this recital, and made me repeat the same thing twice. I also said that your Highness always spoke of his Majesty with esteem and admiration, and ardently desired to pay you his respects. He observed, 'That is not likely; but I should be delighted to see a general of whom I have heard so much.' They intend vigorously to attack the Muscovites, and expect to dethrone the Czar, compelling him to discharge all his foreign officers, and pay several millions as an indemnity. Should he refuse such conditions, the King is resolved to exterminate the Muscovites, and make their country a desert. God grant he may persist in this decision, rather than demand the restitution, as some assert, of the Protestant churches in Silesia! The Swedes in general are modest, but do not scruple to declare themselves invincible when the King is at their head."—*General Grumbkow to Marlborough*, January 11 and 31, 1707; COXE, iii. 159-161.

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went on for some time with varying success ; but at length matters were brought to a crisis, by the King of Sweden declaring that he would treat with none but Marlborough in person.

8.
Visit of
Marlbo-
rough to
Charles at
Dresden.

This immediately led to the English general repairing to the court of Charles XII. at Dresden. He left the Hague on the 20th April accordingly ; and after visiting Hanover on the way, where, as usual, there were some jealousies to appease, arrived at the Swedish camp of Alt-Ranstadt on the 28th. The Duke drove immediately to the headquarters of Count Piper, from whom he received the most flattering assurance of the gratification which the Swedish monarch had felt at his arrival. He was shortly after introduced to the monarch, to whom he delivered a letter from the Queen of England, and at the same time addressed him in the following flattering terms :—" I present to your Majesty a letter, not from the Chancery, but from the heart of the Queen my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea to see a prince admired by the whole universe. I am in this particular more happy than the Queen, and I wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a general as your Majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know in the art of war."^{*}

9.
His address
and success
with that
monarch.

This adroit compliment, from a commander so great and justly celebrated, produced an immediate effect on the Swedish monarch, who was passionately desirous of military glory. His satisfaction was visible in his countenance, and he returned a gracious answer in these

^{*} COXE, iii. 167-169. The authenticity of this speech is placed beyond doubt by Ledyard, who was then in Saxony, and gives it *verbatim*.— See LEDYARD, ii. 126.

terms :—"The Queen of Great Britain's letter and your person are both very acceptable to me, and I shall always have the utmost regard for the interposition of her Britannic Majesty and the interests of the Grand Alliance. It is much against my will that I have been obliged to give umbrage to any of the parties engaged in it. I have had just cause to come into this country with my troops; but you may assure the Queen, my sister, that my design is to depart from hence as soon as I have obtained the satisfaction I demand, but not till then. However, I shall do nothing that can tend to the prejudice of the common cause in general, or of the Protestant religion, of which I shall always glory to be a zealous protector." This favourable answer was immediately followed by an invitation to dine with the King, who placed him at his right hand, and honoured him with the most flattering attention. So great was the general anxiety to see the two heroes together, who had filled the world with their renown, that when they went to dinner it was found necessary to place three regiments around the place, to preserve order and keep off the crowd. In the course of the evening the conversation turned chiefly on military matters, in which Marlborough exerted himself with such skill and success that he obtained another long private audience of Charles; and before his departure that monarch even exceeded his views, by declaring that there could be no security for the peace of Europe till France was reduced to the rank she held at the date of the treaty of Westphalia.¹

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¹ Coxe, iii.
169-171.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
254, 255.
Ledyard,
122-129.

Though the address and abilities of Marlborough, however, had thus removed the chief danger to be apprehended from the presence of the Swedish monarch

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10.
Singular
skill with
which he
avoided
rousing re-
ligious dif-
ferences.

at Dresden, yet other matters of great delicacy remained behind for adjustment, requiring all his prudence and skill to bring to a satisfactory issue. Not the least of these difficulties arose from the zeal of the King of Sweden for the protection of the Protestant religion, and his desire to revive and secure the privileges granted to the German Protestants by the treaty of Westphalia. As Marlborough justly apprehended that the court of Vienna might take umbrage at these demands, and so be diverted from the objects of the Grand Alliance, he exerted himself to the utmost to convince his Majesty that the great object in the mean time, even as regarded the Protestant faith, was to humble the French monarch, who had shown himself its inveterate enemy by the atrocious persecutions consequent on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes ; and that, if this were once done, the Emperor would be unable to prevent the insertion of the requisite stipulations in favour of the Reformed faith in the general treaty of peace which would follow. Charles was convinced by these arguments, which, in truth, were well founded, and even went so far as to propose a secret convention with England for the promotion of the Protestant interest—a proposal most embarrassing at the moment when Great Britain was in close alliance with the Emperor, which Marlborough contrived to elude with admirable dexterity.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
175-181.

11.
His satis-
factory ar-
rangement
of the diffi-
culties re-
garding
Poland.

Another matter of great delicacy was the conduct to be observed towards the dethroned King of Poland, Augustus, who was also at Dresden, and of course viewed the close intimacy between Marlborough and his formidable enemy Charles with the utmost jealousy. But here, also, the diplomatic address of the English

general overcame all difficulties ; for by skilfully taking advantage of the pecuniary embarrassments into which the king had fallen after his territories had been ravaged and exhausted by the Swedish forces, and by engaging that the Emperor should take a large part of the Polish forces into his pay, he succeeded at once in gaining over the dethroned monarch, and securing a considerable body of fresh troops for the service of the Allies. By these means, aided by judiciously bestowing on Count Piper and the chief Swedish ministers considerable pensions, which were paid in advance, Marlborough succeeded in entirely allaying the storm that had threatened his rear. He closely watched the countenance of the Swedish monarch, when politics were under discussion ; and observed with pleasure that he appeared calm and unmoved when Louis XIV. was mentioned, but became animated with kindled eyes and flushing cheek when the Czar was named. In one of his visits also he found the hero wrapt in contemplation of the map of Russia. He accordingly left the Saxon capital, after a residence of ten days, and arrived at the Hague after having been only eighteen days absent, and conducted difficult negotiations with four kings, perfectly confident in the pacific intentions of the Swedish monarch, and having fully divined the intended direction of his forces towards Moscow.¹

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¹ Coxe, iii.
179-182.
Voltaire,
Siècle de
Louis XIV
ii. 127. Vie
de Charles
XII., 115.

The brilliant success with which this delicate and important negotiation had been concluded, naturally induced a hope that vigorous operations would be undertaken by the Allied powers, and that the great successes of the preceding campaign would be so far improved as to compel the court of France to submit to such terms as the peace of Europe and the inde-

12.
Renewed
jealousies
and procras-
tinations of
the Allied
powers.

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pendence of the adjoining states required. The result, however, was quite the reverse, and Marlborough had again the indescribable mortification of seeing month after month of the summer of 1707 glide away, without a single measure conducive to the success of the common cause, or worthy of the real strength of the Allied powers, having been attempted. They had all relapsed into their former and fatal jealousies and procrastination. The Dutch, notwithstanding the inestimable services which Marlborough had rendered to their republic, had again become distrustful, and not only authorised, but expressly enjoined, their field-deputies to thwart and mar all his operations. They made no secret of their resolution, that, their interests being now secured, the blood and treasure of the United Provinces should no longer be expended on enterprises in which the Emperor or the Queen of England were alone concerned. In truth, their own security being provided for by the victory of Ramilies and reduction of so many of the barrier fortresses, they were determined to prevent any further success on the part of the Allied powers, lest it should interfere with their favourite project of securing a barrier for themselves out of the fortresses in the *Austrian* Netherlands, and lead to the establishment of a monarchy in their close vicinity, the enemy of their faith, and more formidable to their independence than even that of Louis XIV. They made it an invariable rule, accordingly, to interfere when any aggressive movement was in contemplation. Even when the Duke, in the course of his skilful marches and countermarches, had gained the opportunity for which he longed, of bringing the enemy to an engagement on terms approaching to an equality,¹ they never failed to interpose with

¹ Coxe, iii.
174. Hist.
de Marl., ii.
261-265.

their fatal negative, and prevent anything being attempted.

The campaign of 1707 commenced in Spain, and it was the magnitude of the disaster sustained there which explains great part of its untoward issue in every quarter. Early in March, Lord Galway took the field with Dos Minas, who commanded the Spanish force; and supposing themselves, though erroneously, as it turned out, to be superior to the enemy, moved forward from Valencia towards Madrid. After a fruitless attempt to reduce Villena, they descended from the mountain range which separates Valencia from New Castile, and advanced in the plain against the army of the Duke of Berwick, which lay around ALMANZA. That accomplished general, who had inherited from his mother the military genius of the Marlborough family, no sooner became aware of their approach than he sent his baggage into Almanza. His army consisted of fifty-two battalions and sixty-two squadrons, mustering twenty-four thousand infantry and eight thousand horse—a force somewhat greater, especially in cavalry, to that which the Allies could bring against him, as they had fifty battalions and seventy squadrons, which only included seven thousand cavalry—in all thirty-one thousand combatants. Aware of his superiority in horse, Berwick permitted the enemy to approach without any molestation. As they were advancing in full view in four lines, and good order, he traversed the lines of his own army, and briefly addressed the men, telling the Spaniards that he expected now to see them give proofs of that valour for which their nation was so famous; and to the French, that he trusted to their bravery and courage, and needed say no more.¹ He placed his

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13.
Defeat of
the Allies
at Almanza
in Spain.

¹ Mem. de
Duc de Ber-
wick, ii.
80-82.
Coxe, iii.
195.

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infantry, supported by the artillery, in the centre ; the cavalry on the flanks—intending to avail himself of his superiority in that arm by outflanking and enveloping the enemy with it after the battle was engaged.

14.
Total de-
feat of the
Allies on
the French
right.

Lord Galway advanced himself at the head of the cavalry on the left, and in moving up made a dash at some hostile guns which annoyed him in the advance ; but they were withdrawn so rapidly that they could not be reached. No sooner, however, did the Spanish cavalry approach the enemy's horse than they turned about and fled, leaving the English regiments of Southwell and Wade, who were intermingled with them, isolated in the midst of the enemy's squadrons. They held firm, however, and opened so vigorous a fire upon the Spanish horse that they fell back in confusion. To improve this advantage, Galway brought up five additional English battalions on the extreme left, who soon passed and attacked the flank of the French right, by this time wholly uncovered by its horse. Berwick, upon this, caused his second line to advance ; and the two lines advanced to within thirty paces when the fire opened, and after several deadly discharges borne on both sides, the English broke, and sustained a very severe loss in their retreat, across a ravine in their rear, from the French dragoons, whom Berwick led in person.¹

¹ Berwick's
Mem. ii.
83, 84.

15.
Progress of
the battle in
the centre
and left.

While this success was gained on the right, affairs were more balanced in the centre and left. The French brigades of Orleans and the Crown there easily overthrew some Spanish regiments which were opposed to them ; but having advanced too far in pursuit, they were taken in flank by a Dutch brigade, which had

routed some Spanish new levies opposed to it, and completely broken. So great was the tumult that the French brigades fled in disorder almost to the walls of Almanza; and the Chevalier d'Arfeld, seeing the panic spreading, with great presence of mind declared that it was only a feigned retreat they were making, and that it was done by the orders of the Duke of Berwick. Meanwhile that great general, seeing the rout in his centre, rapidly moved some regiments of horse from the second line of his right, who charged the Dutch in flank, and drove them back with such vigour that it was only by bringing up the English regiments of Hill and Lord Markkert that their retreat to their own position was covered. On the French left, at this moment, the French cavalry charged a large body of Portuguese horse, who were opposed to them; and no sooner did the latter see the glitter of the enemy's sabres than they turned about and fled,* leaving several regiments of Portuguese infantry uncovered, who were speedily enveloped by the victorious horse, and cut to pieces, bravely resisting to the last man.¹

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¹ Berwick's
Mem. ii.
85, 86.
Coxe, iii.
195.

Meanwhile the English, on their left, not only kept their ground, but had vigorously repulsed a grand charge of sixteen squadrons of horse which Berwick directed against them. But the shameful conduct of the Portuguese horse on the right soon left them exposed to fatal odds. Berwick quickly drew nine battalions, chiefly French, from the centre and left, to oppose the English battalions of Southwell, Blonde, Wade, Stewart, and

16.
Victory declares at all points for the French.

* The Portuguese horse did exactly the same thing at Magalahonda on 11th August 1812, in the course of Wellington's advance to Madrid, after the battle of Salamanca; while, on many occasions during the Peninsular war, the Portuguese infantry rivalled the heroism of their fathers at Almanza.— See ALISON'S *Europe*, c. 82, § 86.

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Montjoie, which had been advanced from their second line, and, supported by the victorious horse, were driving before them the whole of Berwick's right. At the same time he brought up some fresh squadrons which had not yet engaged; and the whole uniting, made a desperate charge on both flanks of the victorious English, while the broken battalions and squadrons in their front re-formed and renewed the conflict. Assailed, then, at once in front and on both flanks, this band of heroes were arrested in their course—the cavalry was driven back, and the infantry exposed to dreadful discharges; and by the fierce onsets of horse on both flanks they were at length broken, and almost entirely destroyed or made prisoners. Resistance now ceased on all sides, and nothing remained but to collect the trophies. Thirteen battalions, which had taken refuge in a wood, laid down their arms in a body; five more were taken during the action. Lord Galway, who acted with great gallantry, was severely wounded by two sabre-cuts: the whole artillery of the Allies, consisting of twenty-four pieces, was taken, with a hundred and twenty standards, eight hundred officers, and six thousand private soldiers. Above five thousand men were killed or wounded; and so great was the desertion after its close that Galway could only collect six thousand men, of whom three thousand five hundred were cavalry, with which he retreated into the mountains towards Tortosa. The Spanish general, Minas, lost all his baggage: his mistress, dressed as an Amazon, was killed at his side. This great victory only cost the French two thousand men, killed and wounded.¹

¹ Berwick's Mem. ii. 87-89. Coxe, iii. 193, 194. Lord Galway's Official Des. April 27. 1707. Coxe, iii. 196.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, with how small a force several of the most decisive actions recorded in

history have been obtained. Ten thousand Greeks at Marathon saved infant Europe from Asiatic subjugation; twenty-four thousand legionary soldiers at Pharsalia gave a master to the Roman world; fifteen thousand English at Cressy and Agincourt all but overturned the kingdom of France; thirty thousand Imperialists, under Eugene, at Turin, broke the power of France in Italy, and for the next century subjected it to the Austrian sway; thirty thousand French, under Napoleon, at Marengo, restored it to the rule of the Tricolor flag; fifteen thousand Americans, at Saratoga, laid the foundation of North American independence; the charge of fifteen hundred English, at Carabobo, when the armies on either side were only seven thousand strong, for ever severed South America from the Castilian monarchy. Not less decisive than any of these memorable battles, that of Almanza fixed the crown of Spain permanently on the heads of the Bourbon family, and in its ultimate effects determined the great War of the Succession in favour of France. The consequences of the disaster were even more fatal than had been foreboded. Before a month had elapsed, the Bourbon commanders had recovered all the provinces of Valencia, Murcia, and Aragon, with the exception of the fortresses of Lerida and Tortosa, and the maritime strongholds of Denia and Alicante. The authority of the Archduke Charles was reduced to the single province of Catalonia, where he could scarcely muster ten thousand soldiers. Worse than all, such disunion and animosities broke out among the Allied generals in the Peninsula, in consequence of this disaster, as rendered all co-operation among them in future impossible. Lord Galway, finding his situation insupportable, and being openly at variance with

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17.
Small force
with which
decisive vic-
tories have
been won.

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Charles, resigned the command, and said, in common with all the generals in his army, that it was hopeless to attempt anything further in Spain.* His words might pass for a transcript of those afterwards used by Moore during the Corunna retreat, and Wellington after the battle of Talavera; so indelible is national character, and so impracticable, jealous, and unreasonable the disposition of the Spaniards, when any foreign interposition is attempted. England has good cause to be proud of this great disaster, and, as in the triumphs of Washington, to glory in the successes obtained against herself; for in both cases they were won by English valour and ability. The battle of Almanza, in which the Duke of Berwick displayed alternately the capacity of a commander and the courage of a hero, was won by an English general, to whom had descended from his father the hereditary courage of the Stuart race, and from his mother the hereditary military genius which made the Duke of Marlborough invincible, and had been derived by both from their common ancestor, Sir Francis Drake. And even against his great capacity the battle would have been gained by the native valour of the Anglo-Saxon race, if the Peninsular troops had at all emulated the steadiness of the five English regiments of foot, who were constantly victorious, till the flight of the Portuguese horse at length consigned them to destruction.¹

¹ Lord Galway's Des. April 27, 1707. Coxe, iii. 196-199.

The circumstance which rendered this victory so decisive was the same as that which had previously caused the shock at Blenheim to be so fatal to France. In both

* "I am under deep concern to be obliged to tell your lordship we were entirely defeated. Both our wings were broken, and let in the enemy's horse, which surrounded our foot, so that none could get off. I cannot but look upon the affairs of Spain as lost by this disaster: our foot, which was our main strength, being gone, and the horse we have left chiefly Portuguese,

cases it was the cavalry which won the day ; and it was the imprudent intermixture of regiments of foot *in line* with the horse, or immediately in their rear, which occasioned the disaster. No formation can be more dangerous, especially where, as at Almanza, a superior force of cavalry is to be encountered, and the ground is favourable for the acting of that arm. Everything comes then to depend on the success of the horse ; for, if they are defeated, the regiments of foot in line are speedily outflanked, surrounded, and cut to pieces. Their exposed flanks can make no resistance whatever to the victorious squadrons by whom, in a few minutes, they are doubled up, forced back upon each other, and reduced to a helpless multitude, jammed together, which has no means of escaping the sabre but by surrender. The destruction of the nine French battalions, after the grand cavalry charge near Oberglau, and the subsequent surrender of twenty-seven battalions in Blenheim, were the exact counterpart of the enveloping and destroying of five battalions in line at Almanza, and the subsequent surrender of thirteen in the wood in its rear. Both were owing to the same vicious disposition of mingling infantry *in line* with, and opposed to a superior body of cavalry.

The only way to avoid these perils, when infantry and cavalry are intended to act together, or in succession, in opposition to a large mass of horse, which is often the case, is to arrange the infantry *in squares*, two in front and one behind, between them, as in a chess-board, so that the enemy's horse, if they sweep away the cavalry,

which is not good at all. All the generals here are of opinion that we cannot continue in this kingdom ; so I have desired Sir George Byng to take on board again the recruits he had just landed at Alicante, and to call there and at Denia for our sick and wounded, which I have sent to Tortosa."—*Lord Galway to Lord Sunderland*, Alegre, April 27, 1707 ; COXE, iii. 196, 197.

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18.
Cause of the
magnitude
of this dis-
aster.

19.
Way in
which these
disasters
are to be
avoided.

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may find themselves in a square, from the three sides of which a destructive fire opens upon their disordered ranks ; or to station a strong body of horse immediately behind the menaced or weak part of the infantry, so that, if the enemy's cavalry break through, they may be immediately charged, when in the tumult of success, by a fresh and compact body of horse, which seldom fails to repulse them with very heavy loss. The first method was practised with success by the Archduke Charles on the second day at Aspern, in repelling the formidable irruption of Bessières' dragoons, which, but for it, would have pierced the centre, and by Wellington in resisting the terrible cavalry charges on the centre at Waterloo. The second was the invariable practice of the Allies in the war of 1813 and 1814, and was the chief means by which they parried the formidable onsets of cavalry which had been fatal to them on so many other occasions. They did this, in particular, with the very best effect, on the second day at Leipsic, when the red Cossacks of the Guard repulsed Kellerman's dragoons, which had broken their centre, and at Eylau, when a similar irruption was defeated, after great early success, by a charge of the Cossacks of the Don on Napoleon's cuirassiers.¹

¹ Alison's Europe, c. 44, § 67 ; c. 57, § 55 ; c. 81, § 36 ; and c. 94, § 18.

20.
Digression
of the Aus-
trians to
Naples.

This terrible disaster in Spain was the more sensibly felt by Marlborough, that, from the course which the cabinet of Vienna had pursued in Italy, there were no means at hand for alleviating or repairing the disaster. The victory of Eugene at Turin in the year preceding had given the Imperialists the command of Italy ; but, by so doing, it had diminished rather than increased the resources which they could render available to support the war in other quarters. Like the Dutch, they were set on objects of separate aggrandisement ; and the

triumph of Turin had opened the avenue to the gratification of this ambition to the south, as that of Ramilies had done to the States-General to the north of the Alps. No sooner had the convention of March 13th made the Imperialists masters of the whole fortresses in the north of Italy than this determination became apparent. By that treaty the whole French garrisons were permitted to withdraw with their arms and artillery unmolested into France ; and the Imperial troops, instead of following them, or taking part in the contest in Spain, were either stationed in garrison in the surrendered fortresses, or sent on a very different destination. By a secret article of the treaty of 13th March, it was provided that a *neutrality* should obtain between the Austrian and French forces in Italy ; and, taking advantage of this lull, Count Daun was despatched with nine thousand men to effect the reduction of Naples, and seat the Austrian dynasty on its throne. This was easily accomplished, and almost without resistance ; for the Bourbon dynasty was extremely unpopular at that period in the kingdom of the two Sicilies, and the Austrian finances, which stood much in need of it, were recruited by contributions levied on the whole southern part of the peninsula.¹

But the effect of this great dispersion of the Imperial force over the whole of Italy necessarily was, that the disposable troops in the north, where the decisive point really lay, were extremely weakened ; and this not only rendered it impossible to send any succours, which otherwise would have been easy, across the bay of Lyons to Catalonia, but so weakened the Imperial forces there as to cause the expedition against Toulon to fail, which, as will immediately appear, had a most pernicious

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March 13.

¹ Hist. Mil.
vii. 75-87.
Coxe, iii.
199.

21.
Which prevents succours being sent to the south of France.

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effect on the general prospects of the war. This false step on the part of the Imperial cabinet, which was undertaken in the face of the most urgent representations on the part both of Marlborough and the British government,* was as advantageous to France as it was adverse to the general interests of the Alliance, for, by relieving Louis of apprehensions or anxiety on the side of Italy, it enabled him to concentrate all his efforts on feeding the war in Spain, around Toulon, and on the Rhine, and mainly contributed to the continued disasters experienced in those quarters. It was the exact counterpart of the expedition to Naples, under Championnet in 1798, ordered from similar predatory motives by the French Directory, which Napoleon so vehemently opposed, and which, in the first instance successful, induced, by weakening the Republican force at the decisive point on the Mincio, the victories of Suwarroff, and expulsion of their arms in the year following from the whole Italian peninsula. So true it is that every generation is instructed by its own and none by its predecessor's errors.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
199-201.
Hist. Mil.
vii, 75-87.
Alison's
Europe, c.
25, § 99.

22.
Forcing of
the lines of
Stollhoffen,
and irrup-
tion of the
French into
the Palati-
nate,
May 24.

The bad effects of this eccentric expedition on the part of the Imperial forces speedily appeared on the Rhine. Relieved by the convention of March 13th of all need of feeding the war in Italy, and reinforced by all the garrisons sent home from the fortresses in Lombardy, Louis was enabled to reinforce his army on the Upper Rhine to such a degree as enabled Marshal

* "The Emperor had consented to spare part of his forces for the invasion of Provence; yet, instead of prosecuting that design with a vigour which might counterbalance the disasters in Spain, his principal attention seemed absorbed in his plans for the acquisition of Naples. In vain Marlborough and the British cabinet represented the danger and impolicy of this ill-timed enterprise. The Imperial court pursued their object with a perseverance which seemed to acquire strength from opposition."—Coxe, iii. 201.

Villars to commence offensive operations, which were attended with entire success. His army amounted to sixty-six battalions and a hundred and eight squadrons, with sixty-four guns, mustering forty thousand combatants—a force greatly superior to that of the Allies under the Margrave of Bareuth, successor of the Prince of Baden, which was opposed to him. Their confidence was mainly rested on the strength of the lines of Stollhofen, which the Prince of Baden had strengthened with the utmost care, and which he regarded as an impregnable barrier against the invasion of his hereditary states. But the event showed that this confidence had been entirely misplaced. Having collected his forces, and skilfully disposed them for the proposed operation, Villars suddenly crossed the Rhine on a bridge of boats at Neuburg and the island of Marquisat, on May 22d, and the next day carried these celebrated lines with such ease that the victory could scarcely be called a battle. Deprived now of the shelter on which they had relied, the confederates retired in precipitation through the defiles of the Black Forest, abandoning the Palatinate to its fate, which was immediately overrun and cruelly ravaged with fire and sword by the French, in revenge of the devastation of the Electorate of Bavaria, three years before, by the armies of Eugene and Marlborough. Such was the terror produced in Germany that no attempt was made to defend the passes of the Black Forest; and the French light-horse penetrated through them as far as Hochstedt, the scene of their alternate triumph and disgrace.¹

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¹ Villars to Louis XIV. Rastadt, May 25, 1707. Hist. Mil. vii. 196-200. Coxe, iii. 215, 216.

Marlborough and Eugene, whose ideas were entirely in unison, and who had concocted all their measures for the campaign, reckoned upon counterbalancing these

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23.
Plan of the
campaign in
Flanders,
and designs
of Marlbo-
rough and
Eugene.

misfortunes in Spain and on the Rhine, by vigorous operations in Flanders and in the south of France. In pursuance of this design, Marlborough, whose forces were best in hand, and were ready to commence operations, was to endeavour to bring the enemy to a general action in Flanders, where, though his troops were not numerically superior to the enemy, success might confidently be anticipated from the superior genius of the general, and the confident spirit of the soldiers. On the other hand, Eugene was to lead a united army of Germans and Piedmontese, estimated at forty thousand men, across the Maritime Alps into the south of France, and lay siege to Toulon, the fortifications of which were in a very bad state, and which, it was hoped, with its great fleet and noble harbour, would easily fall into the hands of the invaders. By the success of such an enterprise a triple object would be gained—security would be obtained for the Duke of Savoy and the Austrian possessions in Italy, by fixing the attention of the French on the defence of their own dominions : they would be prevented, by the danger of Toulon, from sending reinforcements to their army in Spain ; the capture of the fleet would add greatly to the naval power of England ; and the Great Nation would at length be taught that war could be made to recoil upon their own frontiers, and their people compelled to feel, in their own persons, a part of the miseries which they had so long inflicted with impunity upon others. This design was based on just principles, and ably conceived—as much so as, for similar reasons, that of the English against Antwerp was in 1809.¹ Both failed, not from any defect in the original plan, but from the inadequacy of the force employed, and the neglect to take advantage

¹ Coxe, iii.
203, 204.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
264-267.

of the first moment of alarm to push the attack on the beleagured city when it offered a fair chance of success.

Marlborough, in pursuance of these designs, established his headquarters, with his army, at Conderlecht, in Brabant, on the 21st May, having previously written a letter, which showed how clearly he foresaw the disastrous consequences which would ensue from the Austrian expedition against Naples.* He there found the combined forces assembled, consisting of 97 battalions, and 164 squadrons, mustering 68,000 combatants. Those of the enemy were more considerable: it amounted to 123 battalions and 187 squadrons, and numbered 60,000 infantry and 18,000 horse. Nothing but the vast exertions of Louis, and the unity of action in the French monarchy, could have enabled him, in this the sixth year of the war, to produce forces so vast at all points. Encouraged by the superiority of their troops in number, Vendôme and the Elector of Bavaria, who commanded the French, quitted their intrenched camp, and advanced to Sombreuf, establishing themselves in a line a league and a half in length, stretching from the Castle of Ligny, on the right, through Fleurus to Sombreuf on the left. Marlborough had his headquarters at Soignies, and his army occupied the whole field of Waterloo. Everything now presaged great events; and, by a most extraordinary coincidence, the armies about to engage were respectively of the same strength, and

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24.
Opening of
the cam-
paign in
Flanders.
May 24.

* "I have seen by letters from Vienna, that the enterprise against Naples is persisted in, notwithstanding all the remonstrances made against it to the Imperial cabinet. Such a spirit of distrust and jealousy prevails that they will not weigh their true interest, and that the best reasons are urged on them in vain. I will repair to the army on Saturday: they assure me that the enemy is willing to give battle; this is what we especially desire: their troops may surpass ours in number, but they cannot equal them in goodness."—*Marlborough to Lord Manchester; Hist. de Marl.*, ii. 266.

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occupied the same ground, as those of Napoleon and Wellington did a hundred and eight years afterwards.* Ligny, Quatre-Bras, Fleurus — names immortalised in subsequent story — seemed about to become the theatre of great events. Eager to engage, Marlborough, according to his usual custom, advanced with twelve squadrons to reconnoitre the ground ; and his report, with that of the other officers, was so favourable that he obtained a reluctant consent from the Dutch deputies to fight. Overjoyed at this permission, which was the more prized from being so rarely accorded, Marlborough sent forward a detachment to occupy the pass of Ronquières, by which the army required to pass to meet the enemy ; but unfortunately they found it already in the hands of the enemy, and brought back a report that it could not be forced without serious loss. This intelligence spread such a panic among the Dutch deputies that they insisted on a fresh council of war being called, by which it was determined not to fight, but retire to their former position, in order to cover Brussels and Louvain. Marlborough was deeply chagrined at this resolution ; but, with his usual tact and discretion, he ceased to combat a determination which he knew to be immovable, and with a heavy heart withdrew to his former position ; while Vendôme carefully fortified his camp, and established himself in a formidable manner in the neighbourhood.[†]

¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, May 24, 1707. Coxe, iii. 206, 207. Hist. de Marl., ii. 208. Hist. Mil. vii. 25-28.

* Wellington at Waterloo had 67,800 men ; Napoleon, 80,000.—ALISON'S *Europe*, c. xciv. § 8.

† " Since my last, the French have not only drawn as many troops as possible out of their garrisons to make themselves stronger than we, but they have also abandoned their lines, so that we had it in our power to attack any of their towns. But as we could not have our cannon in less than a fortnight, and we had not troops enough to make a siege and cover it, we thought it best to make this march in order to hinder the further designs of the French. But I am of the opinion not to venture a battle, unless we have the advantage on our side. This caution of mine is absolutely necessary ; for

The Dutch deputies were induced to take this decisive step, which entirely altered the events expected in the campaign, in consequence of positive orders from their government to consent to nothing which should bring on a general battle without a certainty of success. The consequence of this determination was, that the whole summer passed away in a species of armed truce, or a series of manœuvres too insignificant to entitle them to the name of a campaign.* Vendôme, who commanded the French, though at the head of a gallant army above eighty thousand strong, had too much respect for his formidable antagonist to hazard any offensive operations, or run the risk of a pitched battle, unless in defence of his own territory. On the other hand, Marlborough, harassed by the incessant opposition of the Dutch deputies, and yet not strong enough to undertake any operation of importance without the support of their troops, was reduced to merely nominal or defensive efforts. The secret of this ruinous system, which was at the time the subject of loud complaints, and appeared wholly inexplicable, is now fully revealed by the published despatches. The Dutch were absolutely

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25.
Secret reasons of the conduct of the Dutch on this occasion.

instead of coming to their camp, I would have marched yesterday to Nivelles; but the deputies would not consent to it, telling me very plainly they would not consent to it, fearing it would bring on a battle. So that, unless I can convince the Pensioner I am not for hazarding but when we have an advantage, they will give such orders to their deputies that I shall not have it in my power to do any good if an advantage should offer itself; besides, the news from the Rhine will, I fear, make the Dutch persist in this opinion of not venturing."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, May 27, 1707; COXE, iii. 209.

* "I cannot venture unless I am certain of success; for the inclinations in Holland are so strong for peace, that, if we had the least disadvantage, it would make them act very extravagant. I must own every country we have had to do with acts, in my opinion, so contrary to the general good, that *it makes me quite weary of serving*. The Emperor is in the wrong in almost everything he does."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, June 27, 1707; COXE, iii. 261.

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set on getting an accession of territory, and a strong line of barrier towns to be set apart for them out of the *Austrian Netherlands*; and as the Emperor, not unnaturally, objected to being thus shorn of his territories, as the return for his efforts in favour of European independence, they resolved to thwart all the measures of the Allied generals, in the hope that, in the end, they would in this manner prevail in their demands with the Allied cabinets.* They were strengthened in their resolution to persist in this selfish and isolated policy, by the disaster of Almanza, and the irruption of Marshal Villars into the Palatinate, for that awakened their terrors as to the ultimate issue of the war; and the opinion become general among them, that the only safe course for the republic was to secure what they had gained, and risk nothing by remaining strictly on the defensive in the Low Countries. Marlborough, as well he might, was most indignant at having his hands in this manner tied by men incapable of judging of his measures, and entirely actuated by selfish considerations. "In the army," said he, "there is all the desire imaginable to venture their lives for the public good; but all other people on this side of the water are so very wise, that I am afraid they will *bring us at last to a bad peace*."¹ For myself, I am old, and shall not live to see

¹ Marlborough to the Duchess, June 13, 1707. Coxe, iii. 213.

* *Despatches*, iii. 142-207.—So much were the Dutch alienated from the common cause at this time, and set on acquisitions of their own, that they beheld with undisguised satisfaction the battle of Almanza, and the other disasters in Spain, as likely to render the Emperor more tractable in considering their proceedings in Flanders. "The States," says Marlborough, "received the news of this fatal stroke with less concern than I expected. This blow has made so little impression in the great towns in this country, that the *generality of the people have shown satisfaction at it rather than otherwise*, which I attribute mainly to the aversion to the present government."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, May 13, 1707; COXE, iii. 204.

the misfortunes that must happen to Christendom if the French be suffered to get the better of us in this war.”

It was not, however, in the Low Countries alone that the selfish views and jealousies of the Allies prevented any operation of importance from being undertaken, and blasted all the fair prospects which the brilliant victories of the preceding campaign had afforded. In Spain, the Allies had suffered, as already mentioned, a fearful reverse by the battle of Almanza, which in a manner ruined the Austrian prospects in the Peninsula, and rendered some operation indispensable to relieve the pressure experienced in that quarter. Peterborough, whose great military abilities had hitherto sustained, nearly alone, their sinking cause in Spain, had been deprived of his command in Catalonia, from that absurd jealousy of foreigners which in every age has formed so marked a feature in the Spanish character. His successor, Lord Galway, was far from possessing his military abilities, and was so much at variance with the Archduke, that all co-operation between them was impossible; and everything presaged that, unless a great effort was immediately made, the crown of Spain, the prize for which all contended in the war, would be lost to the Allied powers. Nor was the aspect of affairs more promising on the Rhine. The signal defeat at Stollhoffen had entirely paralysed the Imperialists. This disaster having opened the gates of Germany, Marshal Villars, at the head of a powerful French army, burst into the Palatinate, which he ravaged with fire and sword. To complete the catalogue of disasters, the disputes between the King of Sweden and the Emperor were again renewed, and conducted with such acrimony¹ that it required all the weight and address of

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26.

Disasters of
the Allies
in Spain and
on the
Rhine.

¹ Coxe, iii.
208-220.
Hist. de
Marb. ii.
269, 270.

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Marlborough to prevent a rupture between these powers, which would have been attended with the most fatal consequences.

27.
Marlborough, in consequence, strongly urges an invasion of the south of France.

Surrounded by so many difficulties, Marlborough wisely judged that the most pressing danger was that in Spain, and that the first thing to be done was to stop the progress of the Bourbon armies in that quarter. As the forces in the Peninsula afforded no hopes of effecting that object, he conceived, with reason, that the only way to make an effectual diversion in the Peninsula was to take advantage of the superiority the Allies had enjoyed in Piedmont, since the decisive victory of Turin in the preceding year, and to threaten Provence with a serious irruption. For this purpose, Marlborough no sooner heard of the disasters in Spain than he urged, in the strongest manner, upon the Allied courts to push Prince Eugene with his victorious army across the Maritime Alps, and lay siege to Toulon. Such an offensive movement, which might be powerfully aided by the English fleet in the Mediterranean, would, he contended, at once remove the war from the Italian plains, fix it in the south of France, and lead to the recall of a considerable part of the French forces now employed beyond the Pyrenees.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
338, 339.

28.
Selfish conduct of Austria, which ruins the expedition.

But though the reasons for this expedition were thus pressing, and Marlborough's project afforded the only feasible prospect of bringing affairs round in the Peninsula, yet the usual jealousies of the coalesced powers, the moment it was proposed, raised insurmountable objections to its being carried into effect with the force adequate to insure its success. It was objected to the siege of Toulon, that it was a maritime operation, of value to England alone: the Emperor insisted on the

Allied forces being exclusively employed in the reduction of the fortresses yet remaining in the hands of the French in the Milanese ; while Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, between whom and the Imperialists the most violent jealousy had arisen, threatened to withdraw altogether from the Alliance, unless Eugene's army was directed to the protection and consolidation of his dominions. He claimed the Milanese also as a fief of the Empire—a pretension which at once embroiled him with the Duke of Savoy, who insisted upon his own right to that duchy. The real object of the Emperor, in throwing such obstacles in the way of these operations, was, that he had ambitious designs of his own on Naples ; and he had, to facilitate their accomplishment, concluded a secret convention with Louis for a sort of neutrality in Italy, which enabled that monarch to direct the forces employed, or destined to be employed there, to the Spanish peninsula. Marlborough's energetic representations, however, at length prevailed over all these difficulties ; and the reduction of the Milanese having been completed, and the jarring claims to it adjusted by Marlborough's interposition, the Emperor, in the end of June, consented to Prince Eugene invading Provence, at the head of thirty-five thousand men. But twelve thousand men, which the Emperor had at his disposal in Italy, were, despite the utmost remonstrances of Marlborough and Eugene, withheld from the Toulon expedition, in order to their being employed in the reduction of Naples—a dispersion of forces worse than useless, since, as Bolingbroke justly observes, if Toulon fell, Naples could not have held out a month, while by attacking both at the same time the force directed against each was so weakened as to render success more than doubtful.¹

¹ Bolingbroke's Works, iii. 42. Coxe, iii. 196-205.

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29.
Invasion of
Provence
by Eugene,
July 27.

The invasion of the territory of the Grand Monarque accordingly took place, and was supported by a powerful English squadron, which, as Eugene's army, consisting of seventy battalions and eight thousand horse, advanced into Provence by the Col di Tende, kept the sea-coast in a constant state of alarm. No resistance, as Marlborough had predicted, was attempted: the Allies, without opposition, were permitted to scale the Col di Tende, and cross the rugged shores of the Var; and their army, almost without firing a shot, arrived at the heights of Vilate, in the neighbourhood of Toulon, on the 27th July. Had Eugene been aware of the real condition of the defences, and the insubordination which prevailed in the garrison, he might without difficulty have made himself master of this important fortress. The garrison did not exceed eight thousand men, and the works, which were very extensive, were in a very dilapidated state; and orders for an immediate assault were impatiently expected by the soldiery. But, from ignorance of these propitious circumstances, Eugene deemed it necessary to commence operations against it in form; and the time occupied in the needful preparations for a siege proved fatal to the enterprise. The French made extraordinary efforts to bring troops to the menaced point; and, amongst other reinforcements, thirteen battalions and nine squadrons were detached from Vendôme's army in the Netherlands; while on the other side Marshal Tissé, with twenty battalions, occupied an intrenched camp in the neighbourhood, to interrupt the operations of the besiegers. The heavy artillery of the besiegers, consisting of a hundred and twenty pieces and eighteen mortars, was meanwhile disembarked, and every preparation made for reducing the place in form.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
340, 341.
Hist. Mil.
vii. 123-130.

But it was all in vain ; and the expedition against Toulon adds another to the numerous examples of the all-important truth, that in a war of invasion, where no co-operation in the interior is to be expected, vigour and celerity in the outset are indispensable to success. Prince Eugene had strongly opposed the expedition, which he regarded as foreign to the real interests of the Emperor ; and he did not cordially co-operate in its execution. His great object was to spare the Imperial troops, whom he regarded, with reason, as the main stay of the monarchy. Meanwhile the French government made the most herculean efforts to collect troops to raise the siege. From all quarters they converged to the menaced point. Roussillon, the interior, the army of the Rhine, and that of Flanders, were made to contribute their quota ; and by the middle of August, Marshal Tissé's army was swelled by seventy fresh battalions, which raised his force to forty thousand men. The progress of the siege in the interim had not been considerable, and the force at Eugene's disposal was evidently unequal to bringing it to a successful issue, and covering it against so large a force. He wisely, therefore, raised the siege on the 21st, having previously embarked all his heavy artillery and stores on board the fleet ; and after a toilsome march of ten days, reached the Var on the 14th September, and recrossed the Col di Tende without molestation from the enemy. But, as was the case with the English at Walcheren a century after, he lost nearly half of his army in this ill-fated expedition, which might have been crowned with entire success had it been prosecuted with vigour in the outset.¹

While fortune was thus declaring against the Allies in the south of France, Marlborough was actively engaged

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30.

Eugene is obliged to raise the siege, and retire into Italy.

¹ Eugene to Marlborough, Aug. 20, 1707. Coxe, iii. 342. Hist. Mil. vii. 122-152.

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31.
Fresh diffi-
culties with
the King of
Sweden.

in adjusting a fresh set of difficulties of the most serious kind, which had arisen between the Emperor and the King of Sweden. The accommodation brought about by his admirable suavity of manner and address at Dresden had not been of long duration. Fresh demands, after his departure, were made by the haughty conqueror, which were urged in a tone that not unnaturally excited the utmost indignation at the Imperial court. Charles now required the Emperor to ratify, without delay, the election of the Prince of Holstein as Bishop of Lubeck; and demanded an immediate discharge of all claims against Sweden for failing to furnish its quota of troops for its provinces in the Empire, as well as an entire exemption during the remainder of his war with Russia. He insisted also on the sequestration of the county of Hadelen, and subsistence for the Swedish troops during their passage through Silesia; and claimed for the Protestants of Silesia the free exercise of their religion. To enforce the latter demand, he sent four regiments of horse, who established themselves in free quarters in the Silesian villages, under pretence of securing for them the undisturbed enjoyment of their faith.¹

¹ Cox, iii.
219, 220.

32.
A treaty is
at length
adjusted,
August 12.

Such was the indignation excited at Vienna, from the arrogant tone in which they were advanced, that the Emperor had all but gone into a wild project of forming an alliance with the Czar Peter, and restoring Stanislaus to the throne of Poland, in order to put a bridle in the mouth of the haughty conqueror. With some difficulty, Marlborough succeeded in diverting him from this extravagant design, which would at once have broken up the Grand Alliance; and by his unwearied efforts and consummate address, which were cordially responded to by Count Zinzendorf, who conducted the negotiations on

the part of Austria, the difficulties were at length overcome, the wounded feelings on each side soothed, and a treaty was finally concluded on 1/12 September, which put an end to the long-agitated differences of the two courts. By it the principal objects for which Charles had contended were secured to him : he obtained the bishopric of Lubeck for his nominee, got a guarantee from the British and Dutch governments for the renunciation of Prince Charles to the succession in the house of Holstein, and a solemn pledge from the Emperor for liberty of conscience to the Silesian Protestants. Highly gratified by this triumph, and duly grateful to the English general, who had mainly contributed to its being gained, Charles at length set out from Dresden to prosecute, as Marlborough had foreseen, his long-cherished designs against Russia ; and on the 25th September his army passed the Oder on its march to the Vistula. Thus was this great danger dissipated, and a conflict, which threatened the very existence of the Grand Alliance, averted ; for such was the terror excited by Charles that, as long as the thunder-cloud overhung Dresden, the whole efforts of Austria and the lesser German powers were paralysed. So great was the alarm at Vienna, that, when the Pope's nuncio made some remonstrances against the number of churches (above a hundred) which were ceded to the Protestants, the Emperor replied—" You are very fortunate that the King of Sweden did not propose to me to become a Lutheran ; for, if he had wished it, I don't know but what I should have done so."¹

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¹ Voltaire—
Vie de
Charles
XII., 118.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
282. Coxe,
iii. 219-221.

Having got quit of this dangerous neighbour, and brought to a successful issue this delicate and important negotiation, Marlborough was extremely anxious to

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33.
Operations
in Flanders.

achieve something important in Flanders, which might in some degree counterbalance the disasters in Spain, Germany, and the south of France. With this view, as soon as he was informed of the detaching of thirteen battalions from Vendôme's army to the south of France, he broke up from his camp at Meldorp, where he had remained inactive for six weeks, and, crossing the Dyle at St Joris Wert, marched all night, and reached Genappe on the morning of August 11. His object was to attack Vendôme in his camp at Gomblours ; but no sooner did that able commander receive intelligence of his approach than he withdrew from his position, and retreated to Senef, in the direction of Mons. Marlborough followed him closely ; and, as it was evident the French were making for their intrenched camp, fortified with great care in the neighbourhood of Cambron, he made the greatest exertions to overtake them before they reached it. With this view, he detached Count Tilly, with forty squadrons and five thousand grenadiers, on the morning of the 14th August, with orders to move across the space between the two armies, and fall on the enemy's rear-guard. But the French commanders were so anxious to avoid an action that they decamped, without sound of drum or trumpet, the evening before, and, by marching all night, gained such a start of the Allies that they reached their intrenched camp, in front of Mons, without molestation, though considerably weakened by desertion, and with the troops dreadfully fatigued by the forced marches during four days and two nights which they had undergone. Two thousand of the deserters entered the Allied service. Heavy rains succeeding immediately after, which continued without interruption for a fortnight, rendered further

operations impossible. But although, by this precipitate retreat, Marlborough was foiled in his design of bringing the enemy to a general action, the spirits of his army and Allies were much raised by his advance, and the evident disinclination of the French to meet him in the field; and Prince Eugene, who lost no opportunity of lauding the achievements of his illustrious rival, justly observed, it proved what he would have achieved early in the campaign, had he not been restrained by the timidity of the Dutch deputies.¹ *

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¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, Aug. 15, 1707. Coxe, iii. 318. Hist. de Marl. ii. 277, 278.

The weather having at length cleared up, Marlborough made a fresh movement in advance, and, on September 1, crossed the Dender, and established his headquarters at Ath, directly on the high road to Mons. The enemy, however, fell back towards the Scheldt, whither they were followed by the English general, who, having passed that river, advanced by the tongue of land which lies between it and the Lys, and established his headquarters at Helchin. As this bold movement threatened the enemy's communications, they lost no time in also crossing the Scheldt, and withdrew into their lines formed behind the Marque, stretching from Pont-à-Tressin to Lille, and under cover of the cannon of the latter fortress. This camp was extremely strong; and as Marlborough's heavy artillery was in the rear, and the advanced season of the year precluded the possibility of bringing it up before the rains began, nothing further was attempted during the campaign.¹

34.
Marlborough again advances, and the French retire to Lille, Sept. 1.

¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, Sept. 5, 1707. Coxe, iii. 337. Hist. de Marl. ii. 280, 281. Hist. Mil. vii. 49, 55.

* "What your Highness has done, since you had the power of marching against the enemy, evidently proves that this campaign would have been as glorious as the last, if you had not been restrained by the great circumspection of the Dutch deputies, who, ignorant of our profession, follow the opinion of their generals, who know nothing but defensive warfare."—*Eugene to Marlborough*, Aug. 19, 1707; COXE, iii. 318.

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35.
Marlborough closes
the campaign, and
returns to
England,
Nov. 7.

Marlborough led his army into winter-quarters in the end of October, and Vendôme did the same; the weather being so thoroughly broken as to render it impossible to keep the field. He repaired first to Frankfort, where he met the Elector of Hanover, and then to the Hague, where he exerted himself to inspire a better feeling in the Dutch government, and to get Eugene appointed to the supreme command in Spain—a project which afforded the only feasible prospect of retrieving affairs in the Peninsula, and which, if adopted, might have changed the fate and ultimate issue of the war. Neither the Emperor nor the court of Madrid, however, would consent to this arrangement: the former, because he feared to lose that great general in Italy; the latter, because they feared to gain him in Spain. Marlborough, meanwhile, embarked for England on the 7th November, where his presence had now become indispensably necessary for arresting the progress of public discontent, fanned as it was by court and parliamentary intrigues, and threatening to prove immediately fatal to his own influence and ascendancy, as well as to the best interests of England.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
337-371.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
234-237.

36.
Causes of
the reaction
against
Marlborough, and
the war at
this time.

The origin of these intrigues is to be found not merely in the asperity of party feeling, which at that time, owing to the recent Revolution, prevailed to a degree never before paralleled in English history, and the peculiar obloquy to which Marlborough was exposed, owing to the part he had taken in that transaction, but to other causes of a general nature, which, more or less in every age, have exercised an important influence in English history. Notwithstanding the powerful elements of popular administration which from the earliest times have been at work in this country, the English are at

bottom a loyal and orderly people. Fidelity to their sovereigns is linked in their minds with obedience to their God ; their prayers seldom cease to be at once for their *king* and country. It was a rare combination of circumstances which, for a brief space during the reign of Charles I., brought the sacred names of King and Parliament into collision ; and the universal grief which followed the death of that unhappy monarch, and the transports of joy which attended the Restoration, showed how deep were the foundations of loyalty in the English heart. The tyrannical conduct of James II., and his undisguised attempt to re-establish the Romish faith in his dominions, had for a time united all parties against him, and made them all feel the necessity of his expulsion. But when the deed was done, and the danger was removed—when the monarch was in exile, and a new dynasty on the throne—the minds of men began to return to their original dispositions. Old feelings revived, former associations regained their sway, time softened animosities, misfortune banished fear, and many who had been foremost in the dethronement of the former monarch, in secret mourned over their triumph, now that he was in exile and distress.¹

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¹ Boling-
broke—
State of
Parties.
Works, iii.
123, 124.

In addition to these generous and therefore honourable feelings, there were others springing more immediately from the selfish affections, but the influence of which was not, on that account, the less likely to be in the long run powerful in their operation. It never had been intended, at least by the great body of those who united in bringing about the Revolution, to make any change either in the structure or administration of the government. What they designed was to restore and secure the government, ecclesiastical and civil, on its old and

37.
Change in
the system
of govern-
ment by the
Revolution.

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¹ Bolingbroke, *ibid.*

true foundations. “Whatever might happen,” says Bolingbroke, “to the King, there was no room to suspect any change in the constitution.”¹ But with whatever intentions it may be set about, no established government can be overturned, without inducing a very great alteration in the subsequent administration of public affairs. The new dynasty rests not merely on a different party, but different principles from the old one : new passions are awakened, new interests created, new classes brought into political power. This was immediately felt on the Revolution. The principle of the former Government had been *loyalty* : that being destroyed, the principle of the new one was *interest*. The legitimate monarchs had rested mainly on the faith of the cavaliers, landed proprietors, and rural inhabitants. The dynasty brought in by the Revolution stood on the support of the moneyed power and the citizens of towns. They could not be expected to have the “unbought loyalty” which was felt by the rural population ; nor could a new dynasty reckon on awakening, in a few years, such feelings, which are in general the bequest of centuries. They were actuated mainly by self-interest ; and it was to be gratified chiefly, if not entirely, by promoting pecuniary profit. This was perfectly understood by the new Government. To attach men to the new order of things by the strong bond of individual ambition became the great object of administration ; and this was accomplished in a way, and to an extent, which ere long excited the most serious alarm through the country.

38.
Vast in-
crease of
loans, taxes,
and corrup-
tion.

William brought with him from Holland, where experience had long made them known, a perfect acquaintance with the principles on which, in republican states, the influential classes are to be attached to the govern-

ment. He was aware that self-interest is all-powerful in the long run with mankind, in whatever rank or station; but that, in republican states, money, as the sole power, is omnipotent. He knew also the wonderful, and, except to the Dutch, then unknown influence of industry, in creating capital, as well as the power of the borrowing system in eliciting it. On these two foundations the new Government was built up. Extensive and costly wars were undertaken, both to uphold the new dynasty and to maintain the balance of power in Europe. The ambition of Louis XIV., and his atrocious persecution of the Protestant religion, served at once to furnish too good a ground for these contests, and to inflame the national feelings to carry them on. But, in their prosecution, the great change made by the Revolution was immediately seen. The old want of money which had been felt as so sore an evil from the earliest times, and so often interrupted the career of success, and rendered abortive the greatest victories, was no longer experienced. Loans to an immense extent were contracted every year; the national debt, which had been £664,000 at the Revolution, was already nearly £50,000,000 sterling. The taxes annually raised had increased from £2,000,000, their extent when James was dethroned, to above £5,000,000. This prodigious increase not only formed a material addition to the public burdens, but inspired the most dismal apprehensions as to the ultimate, and, as it was then thought, not remote absorption of the whole property of the nation into the hands of the public creditors. Men could see no hope of salvation under a system which had augmented the national debt *eighty-fold* in twenty years. The large addition which these loans brought

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¹ Boling-
broke on
the State
of Parties
— Works,
iii. 294-297.

to the national resources had given the Government a vast increase of patronage, of which they made an unsparing use, for securing their influence in the constituencies, and maintaining a majority in the House of Commons. Every office, from the premiership to the lowest excise appointment, was bestowed as the reward of political support, and could be obtained in no other way ; and to such extent was actual corruption carried on in the constituencies, that the public mind was generally debauched, and patriots of all parties mourned in secret over the unbounded deluge of selfishness which had overspread the nation since the Revolution.¹

39.
Liability of
women to
change of
disposition
and favour-
ites.

In addition to these powerful causes of general discontent, which were all visited on Marlborough's head as an important agent in bringing about the Revolution, and the visible and acknowledged head of the war party, there were others in operation, which, at all times and in all courts, but especially under a female reign, are likely to produce important public results. It is a mistake to say that coquetry or the love of admiration are the greatest foibles of the female character. They are commonly considered to be so, because they are the ones which occasion most distress and vexation to men ; but whoever has attended to woman, either in the transactions of business, or the affairs of the heart, must be aware that liability to change is the principal weakness to which they are subject : *inconsistency is their great defect*. It is not so much that they assume at any one time what they do not feel, as that they feel quite differently at one time from what they did at another. They are, in many cases, sincere at all times, but consistent at none. This defect is the more irremediable, that it arises from the excess and undue influence of the very

qualities of the heart which render them so charming, and qualify them best for the most important functions they are destined to discharge in the world. It arises at bottom from the instinct which prompts them to leave all, and cleave to a husband ; it springs from the intensity of the feelings, which softens the anguish of the first separation, and lays the foundation of another home, with which all their interests and happiness in future life are to be wound up.

But though this liability to new impressions is a fortunate and often blessed circumstance, if the destiny and inevitable fate of woman in private life is considered, it becomes a serious, often a fatal defect, when they are removed from what is, perhaps, after all, their proper sphere, and called on to discharge great and important functions in business or public life. Firmness and steadiness of character are then the first requisites for lasting utility or success ; and it is very rarely that these qualities are found to exist in those women who are elevated by their rank above control, and exposed by their power to all the influences of the most attractive of the other sex. Thence the common remark, justified by every page of history, that the reigns of queens exhibit in general little more than the successive influence of different favourites, with most of which changes the national policy undergoes a total alteration. It is rare, indeed, to find a queen who can separate the one from the other, and bestow her smiles successively on a Leicester and an Essex, while in matters of state she is permanently ruled by a Cecil. In general, the policy follows and varies with the inclination. Queen Elizabeth did not solve this difficulty when she wittily observed, in answer to one of her courtiers who remarked on the

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40.
Its dangers
in a queen.

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superior lustre and felicity of female reigns above those of men—"It is no wonder it is so, for queens are governed by men, and kings by women." That is no doubt very often the case ; but she forgot to add, what is equally true, that the favourites who govern queens are in general, whatever their attractions may be, neither the most estimable nor superior of their sex ; and that, although that is often the case with the mistresses of kings, yet their influence is, in general, not so vividly manifested in affairs of state, or the general direction of the national policy.

41.
Queen
Anne's early
friendship
for Marl-
borough.

That Queen Anne was sincerely attached both to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and had the utmost reliance on the judgment and capacity of the former, as well as an enthusiastic friendship for the latter, is placed beyond a doubt. Not only does her correspondence, now published in Coxe, for a long course of years evince the warmest affection and confidence, but her acts at that time evinced the depth and sincerity of her feelings ; and it is acts even more than words which lay bare the human heart. She was generous and munificent in the highest degree, at a time when her own pecuniary resources were far from considerable, not only to Marlborough and his lady, but to their daughters ; and her letters to them breathe so much the air of a romantic boarding-school attachment, that one might be tempted to believe it would share in its fleeting character, were its durability not proved by a long course of decisive acts through life. The Princess who, with an income of only £50,000 a-year, could press a gift of £10,000 on each of Marlborough's daughters at their marriage, and actually give £5000 when they declined the larger sum, cannot be accused of insincerity ; for all

dissimulation and acting flies off at once and invariably before the money test.

We must seek for an explanation of the well-known change in the Queen's sentiments towards Marlborough, and the important changes in national policy to which it gave rise, therefore, in other causes than any insincerity or weakness in her original attachment. These causes were some of a general, some of a private nature. Bred up in communion with the Church of England, and retaining through life a sincere veneration for that establishment, Anne's private feelings and inclinations led her more to the High Church and monarchical, than to the Low Church and democratic party. Though far from being, like her father and brother, a Roman Catholic, she was still farther from being a Puritan; and she had her full share of those high Royalist feelings and principles which naturally, and perhaps inevitably, spring up in the breasts of all who are born in these exalted stations. Nothing but her steady attachment to the Church of England, and well-founded abhorrence of that of Rome, from an experience of its effects, had led her to separate from James at the Revolution; and when the succession opened to her upon the death of William, it was not without great reluctance and very serious misgivings that she accepted the throne. Those doubts and difficulties adhered to her through life; and it was only by the austere and unbending character of James, which increased rather than diminished with adversity, and led him to refuse all attempts at a compromise, that she was prevented from entering into an arrangement which should secure the crown, at her demise, to his son, the lineal heir.

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42.
Real causes
of Anne's
alienation
from Marl-
borough.

Marlborough's prominent position, as the head of the

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43.

The Queen's
partiality to
the Tories,
and the
Duchess's to
the Whigs.

party which brought about the Revolution, and the deeds past forgiveness then committed by him, to the entire ruin of the reigning family, naturally threw him in public life into connection with the leaders of the Whig party, who had been its main authors; and the Duchess was warmly attached to its principles. This arose inevitably from her position. She was well aware that her husband had sinned past redemption in the estimation of the Jacobites, and that not only would his influence and position be lost, but his head would be placed in the utmost danger, by a restoration of the exiled family. Her influence, therefore—and it was very great at first—was all exerted at court to secure the promotion only, especially to offices round the palace, of persons whose Whig principles were beyond a doubt. But the Queen's secret inclination led her more strongly to the Tory and High Church party; and although, as a matter of necessity, her cabinet was chiefly composed of Whigs, yet there was always an intermixture of Tories among them; and in clerical appointments, her preference of the latter party was, from the first, very conspicuous. Thus the Queen and the Duchess, although they began on terms of the greatest confidence and intimacy, yet were in reality swayed by opposite sets of principles; and this divergence necessarily brought them into collision in cases of appointments in the Church or about the palace, when a selection required to be made of a person belonging to one or the other party.

Such was the suavity of Marlborough's manner, his influence with women, and the judgment and prudence with which that influence was exercised, that, had he continued in England at the head of the cabinet after the war began, it is probable that the dissension between

the Queen and the Duchess would never have assumed a serious aspect, and the change which proved so fatal to the interest of the Grand Alliance never taken place. But his departure to take the command of the Allied army, and long absence at its head, contributed, in the most essential manner, to widen the breach between them. It was hard to say whether his absence or his victories contributed most to alienate them from each other. The character of the Duchess—irritable, proud, and ambitious—could not stand the elevation which the prodigious victories and unbounded influence of her husband had given him. She had none of the temper, wisdom, and moderation, which led him to conceal all consciousness of that greatness, and, by letting none feel its force, rendered his sway irresistible over all. On the contrary, her arrogance, both of manner and conduct, increased with every triumph which he won : she openly aspired to the entire direction at court, and considered herself as slighted if she did not possess the same influence within the precincts of the palace, and in disposing of its appointments, as her husband did at the head of the armies. This change always became more conspicuous after Marlborough's departure for the seat of war in spring ; and so rapid was the progress of dissension between the illustrious women during his absence, that it required all his address and temper to adjust matters between them in winter on his return, and leave them on terms of tolerable friendship when he again departed for the Continent in the early part of the following year.

These causes of dissension, which perhaps were unavoidable in the circumstances in which both were placed, were much aggravated by the tendency to

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44.

Which was
increased by
Marlbo-
rough's ab-
sence and
success in
war.

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45.
Vacillation
and incon-
sistency in
the Queen.

inconsistency of thought, and favouritism to individuals, which was so conspicuous in the Queen. She had not sufficient strength of mind to regulate her public conduct by fixed principle, nor steadiness enough to make the memory of the absent prevail over the arts of the present in private life. That she should have been offended with the ambition and arrogance of the Duchess, who aspired to be a sort of female prime-minister, and, in a manner, supersede the sovereign, was natural and excusable; but, unfortunately, she permitted these causes of feminine jealousy to interfere with the estimation in which she held her former favourite's husband, and, to gratify a wretched court intrigue, to be content to lose all the fruits of his glorious victories. Not content with dismissing the Duchess from her intimacy, she banished Marlborough from her councils, and threw herself into the arms of his political opponents, whose leading principle of action was to undo everything that he had done—a principle which they too successfully carried into effect. In acting in this manner in affairs of state, and in opposition to so great a man as Marlborough, the Queen showed that she was subject to the two greatest weaknesses of her sex—that of being governed in conduct by persons, not principles; and that of yielding, in the choice of her favourites, to the influence of successive attachments, instead of remaining steady to one lasting preference, founded in reason and justified by character.

46.
Commence-
ment of the
Duchess's
decline in
influence at
court.

The decline in the influence of the Duchess at court was very visible, so early as the autumn of 1706, when the thunder of Ramilies was still ringing in the ears of the nation. The immediate cause of dissension was the struggle for the appointment of a secretary of state

in room of Sir Charles Hedges. Being son-in-law to Marlborough, the Duchess cordially went along with the Whigs in the support of the Earl of Sunderland, who had made himself an active partisan of that party ; but Marlborough had good sense enough to see that he was not fitted for such an appointment, and to resist at first all the importunity of the Duchess in his behalf. He suffered himself, at length, however, to be persuaded by Godolphin, who, finding the Whigs determined on gaining their point, declared his resolution of resigning rather than that it should be refused. Fearful of losing a valuable and faithful servant, the Queen tried a compromise, and offered to make Sunderland a privy councillor, with an office of higher emolument than that of secretary of state, but which would not, like it, entitle him to constant access to her presence. This, however, was not what the Whigs desired ; and, accordingly, they made Sunderland decline the offer. This decision much irritated both the Queen and the Duchess ; and it so distressed Marlborough that he declared he was weary of the public service, and that vexation had made his hair turn grey.¹

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¹ Coxe, iii.
84-109.
Marlborough to the
Duchess,
Sept. 28,
1707.

The Queen, who very naturally was most anxious to effect a compromise which might prevent a break-up in her cabinet, and occasion the retirement of so valuable a servant as Lord Godolphin, accordingly again and again pressed the inferior situation on Lord Sunderland. The Duchess, on the other hand, was not less eager in urging his appointment as secretary of state on the Queen, and preferred her request with an ardour and vehemence which were not a little displeasing to the royal mind. The Queen showed her sense of this in her manner ; and the letters of the Duchess evince

47.
Dissension
about Sun-
derland's
appoint-
ment.

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1707.

clearly how rapidly the breach was widening between them.* An angry correspondence, if conducted by those who are not masters of their temper, and seriously attached to each other, is much more likely than personal collision to produce lasting alienation; for explanations are impossible at a distance, and misunderstandings, which a word or a look might have cleared up, are dwelt upon in absence till imagination acquires all the force of reality, and reconciliation becomes impossible. This clearly appeared in the letters which passed between the Queen and the Duchess in regard to this appointment, which, beginning at first in kindness, gradually evince angry feelings, and at length terminate in mutual recriminations, which showed that they were permanently alienated from each other.¹

¹ See the letters in Coxe, iii. 110-119.

48.
Secret reasons of the keenness of both parties on this question.

From the eagerness with which the Duchess urged and the Queen resisted this appointment, it might easily be divined—what in truth was the case—that vital interests were at stake in it; and that it was not mere fondness for her son-in-law on the part of the former, nor personal dislike on that of the latter, which occasioned the breach. Lord Sunderland was personally obnoxious to the Queen, in consequence of the active part which he had taken in the House of Peers, in opposition to his own father-in-law, in resisting the settlement of £50,000 on her during the reign of William. This she regarded,

* “Your Majesty’s great indifference and contempt, in taking no notice of my last letter, did not so much surprise me as to hear my Lord Treasurer say you had complained much of it, which makes me presume to give you this trouble to repeat what was the whole aim of the letter. It was to show your Majesty why I had not waited upon you, believing you were uneasy, and might fear I had some private concern for Lord Sunderland. I therefore thought it necessary to assure your Majesty that I had none so

not without reason, as an uncalled-for piece of spite on his part, which was the more unpardonable, as she had been in a manner the architect of Marlborough's fortune, and had acted in the most generous manner to his own wife, Lady Sunderland, on whom she had settled £10,000 on her marriage. The Duchess was well aware of the ground of aversion to Lord Sunderland, and she could not but feel its justice ; because she had herself shared to the very full, and loudly expressed, the Queen's indignation on that occasion. There must have been a very powerful motive, therefore, which induced so able a woman and experienced a courtier to run the risk of an estrangement by urging this appointment on the Queen ; and that reason was this—

The strong Tory partialities of her Majesty, which had clearly appeared in several recent clerical appointments, were no secret to those in her intimate circle, and accordingly the cabinet had always, in conformity with her wishes, contained a certain number of Tories, and been in some degree of a mixed character. Harley and St John, who afterwards became the principal instruments of his fall, had been introduced into the Government by Marlborough himself. But although the mixed composition of the cabinet did very well as long as the Whigs had a clear majority, and the inclinations of the Queen were felt to be entirely with them, the case was very different when the security of this majority was

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1797.

49.
Dread of
the Tories
was the rea-
son.

great as for your service, and to see my Lord Treasurer so mortified at the necessity of quitting it, or being the ruin of that and himself together. Your Majesty, to carry on your government, must have men that *neither herd with your enemies* nor are in themselves insignificant. I pray God Almighty, with as much earnestness as I should do at the last day for the saving of my soul, that Mrs and Mr Morley might see their errors."—*Duchess of Marlborough to Queen Anne*, Aug. 30, 1706 ; COXE, iii. 112.

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threatened, and the secret partialities of her Majesty had become more than suspected. It then became a matter of great importance to secure even a single vote in the cabinet; and, above all, possession of an office which necessarily brought its holder into daily personal contact with the sovereign, became absolutely vital. The Whigs dreaded above everything the possible introduction of a secretary of state, who might take advantage of his constant opportunities of private conference to fortify the Queen in her Tory and High Church partialities. The importance of this personal intercourse has always been strongly felt, and, in many of the most important crises of English history, has determined the composition of the cabinet, and with it the destinies of the country. The Duchess of Marlborough was brought into collision with the Queen, from the same causes which induced the Whigs, in 1810, to refuse the ministry, because they were not allowed the appointment of three household offices, and this led to the continuance of the war, the battle of Waterloo, and the peace of Paris.

50.
Marlbo-
rough joins
the Duchess
in urging
the appoint-
ment.

Finding her own efforts to secure the appointment of her Whig son-in-law ineffectual, the Duchess brought up her husband to her support; and he addressed several letters to her Majesty on the subject, which are very valuable, not only as containing the best summary extant of the reasons which induced the Whigs to insist on this appointment, but also as exhibiting a clear view of the causes which really brought Marlborough into collision with the throne, and ultimately brought about his fall. In one of the last of these he observes, "The Lord Treasurer assures me that any other measures but those he has proposed must ruin your business, and

oblige him to quit his staff, which would be a great trouble to him, and I am afraid will have the fatal consequence of *putting you into the hands of a party*, which God only knows how you would then be able to get out of it. It is true your reign has been so manifestly blessed by God, that one might reasonably think you might govern without making use of the heads of either party, but as it might ease yourself. This might be practicable if both parties sought your favour, as in reason and duty they ought. But, Madam, the truth is, that the heads of one party have declared against you and your government, as far as it is possible without going into rebellion. Now, should your Majesty disoblige the others, how is it possible to obtain near five millions for carrying on the war with vigour, without which all is undone? Your Majesty has had so much knowledge and experience yourself of the capacity and integrity of the Lord Treasurer, that you cannot but know you may safely rely upon his advice; and if there be any opinions different from this, your Majesty will allow me to say, they neither know so much of these matters, nor can they judge so well of them.”¹

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¹ Marlborough to Queen Anne, Oct. 24, 1706. Coxe, iii. 118.

Notwithstanding the urgency of this appeal, and the strength of the arguments as well as weight of the names by which it was supported, the Queen still held out; and Marlborough, in despair of success, wrote to the Duchess, “If the letter I sent you has no effect with the Queen, I shall conclude that God intends that way to punish us for our faults; for I think what you have written to her on 13th September cannot be answered.” The Duchess had several interviews with the Queen on the subject, but still she protracted her final decision,

51.
The Queen still holds out, and Marlborough still trusts Harley and St John.

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1707.

¹ Marlborough to Queen Anne, Oct. 29, 1706.
Coxe, iii. 120.

proposing one expedient after another to avert the much-dreaded appointment.¹ These interviews gave rise to altercations which were conducted with warmth on both sides, and terminated in mutual alienation.* It became evident, from her unwonted firmness on this occasion, that she was powerfully backed by some persons of weight in the Government; and the suspicions of the Duchess and leading Whigs were turned towards Harley and St John, the ablest of the Tory party, as the real actors in the movement which was going forward. Although the event showed that these suspicions were well founded, yet such was the power of address and dissimulation which these two able men possessed, and so entire the confidence with which they had inspired Marlborough and Godolphin, by whom they had been brought into power, that nothing could shake their confidence in their fidelity.²

² Coxe, iii. 124-126.

52.
Views and language of Harley and St John at this period.

It is not surprising that this confidence on their part, in Harley and St John, was so firm, for nothing at this period could exceed the strength and apparent sincerity of their professions of attachment to the Queen's government, and to Marlborough and Godolphin in particular. The tone they took was that of general loyalty and

* "I told her I knew very well all Mrs Freeman's [Duchess's] complaints from having lost Mrs Morley's [Queen's] kindness unjustly, and her telling her truths which other people would not; to which she said, as she had done forty times, how could she show me any more kindness than she did, when she would never come near her? I said she had tried that several times, and always found it the same thing. Upon that she said Mrs Freeman would grow warm sometimes, and then she herself could not help being warmer than she ought to be, but that she was always ready to be easy with Mr Freeman. I said I hoped she would then be so, for that I would die with all my soul to have them two as they used to be. She then said she would send a letter for you, and so she did last night; but you will see by her letter to Lord Marlborough that she still leans to expedients."—*Godolphin to Duchess of Marlborough*, October 30, 1706; Coxe, iii. 121.

devotion to her Majesty, the deepest gratitude and attachment to these two noblemen, and equal dislike at the violence and animosity of either party. It was impossible to foresee, it could not have been credited, that, with these professions in their mouths, they were in reality secretly organising a cabal which was one day to overturn their benefactors.* Marlborough was the less inclined to break with such able men as he knew both Harley and St John to be, that he was well aware his difficulties were not with the Tories only ; but that many of the Whigs, envious of his fame and jealous of his power, were disposed to join in the chorus of abuse with which, for party purposes, he was assailed. In truth, some of the blackest calumnies with which he was persecuted came from the envious tongues of his own party, who could forgive neither his extraordinary rise nor his unbroken success. And while he met with these malicious inventions of his own party, he could not be insensible to the elegant flattery of St John and Harley, which was couched in the beautiful language of which

* " I have no thoughts but for the Queen's service and your Lordship's ; I have no inclination to any one more than another ; I have no animosity to any. But I think I should not do the duty of a public servant to your Lordship, if I did not tell you what you may hear, if you please, from people of undoubted credit, Whigs themselves, that all that has been done has not obliged the party : whether it has their pretended leaders, will be shown hereafter. I hope your Lordship will rescue us from the violence of either party ; and I cannot forbear saying, I know no difference between a mad Whig and a mad Tory ; and as for the inveteracy of either party—

' *Ilacos infra muros peccatur et extra.*'

" There is no need of going back two years, nor scarce four months, to hear the most *inveterate malicious things said by their leaders* against the Queen, my Lord Duke, and your Lordship, *that tongue could utter*, besides what the last parliament could produce from their undertakings ; and this is so notorious that it is very common to match one malicious story from a Tory with another from a Whig."—*Harley to Godolphin*, Nov. 16, 1706 ; SOMERVILLE'S *Queen Anne*, 622.

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they were such thorough masters, and had every appearance of sincerity and candour.* But while the generous spirit of Marlborough, occupied with great objects, and at a distance from the scene of intrigue, refused to credit any surmises as to the fidelity of his favourite *protégés*, the more experienced eye of Godolphin had already discerned the real authors of all the difficulties which prevailed, and he had recently warned his confiding colleague that they were no longer to be trusted.†

Matters were in this state, still undecided, and with the Queen postponing any decision, when Marlborough

* "I heartily wish your Grace a prosperous voyage and speedy arrival here, where I am sure you will find such a disposition to do everything that is reasonable, as I never remember formerly. I doubt not but your Grace's true sense and superior genius will dispel all those clouds that hang about us, and show the true path to a leading settlement clear of the narrow principles and practices of the heads of both factions."—*Harley to Godolphin*, Nov. 12, 23, 1706; COXE, iii. 126.

† "There are some restless spirits who are foolishly imagined to be the heads of a party who make much noise, and have no real strength, that expect the Queen, crowned with success abroad, and governing without blemish at home, should court them at the expense of her own authority, and support her administration by the same shifts that a vile and profligate one can only be kept up with. We have had some instances of late how they would use their power, and your Grace cannot but know that, in the distribution of employment, they have insisted on the seum of their own party. I am too well acquainted with your Grace's goodness to suspect you will not pardon me saying so much, since I have no interest or view but the Queen's service and my gratitude and duty to you, who have tied me to be forever, my Lord, your Grace's most devoted, faithful, humble friend."—*St John to Marlborough*, Nov. 12, 23, 1706; COXE, iii. 127.

‡ "Lady Marlborough told me this morning, and promised to write to you, that Mr Harley, Mr St John, and one or two more of your particular friends, were underhand endeavouring to bring all the difficulties they could think of upon the public business in the next session, and spoke of it to me as taking it for granted it was what I must have heard of before. Whatever be their motive, the thing is destructive and pernicious. I have had a long letter this very day full of professions of being guided in these measures, as in all others, by you and me; but at the same time, I doubt so much smoke could not come without some fire."—*Godolphin to Marlborough*, October 18, 29, 1706; COXE, iii. 129.

returned from the Continent, on the 16th November. His presence produced its usual effect in stilling animosities and overcoming resistance. He came back surrounded by a halo of glory. The victory of Ramillies, the delivery of Brabant, rendered him all-powerful. He was too great to be overlooked, too fascinating to be resisted. Fearful of provoking farther animosity on the part of the Whigs, and possibly directing their hostility against Harley or St John, whom she anxiously wished to retain in her service, the Queen gave a reluctant consent to the removal of Sir Charles Hedges, and the appointment of Lord Sunderland in his room as Secretary of State. This important step was immediately followed by several important promotions in the Whig party. Lord Wharton and Lord Cholmondeley were made earls; Sir Thomas Pelham and Mr Cowper, barons; Sir James Montagu, brother of Lord Halifax, Solicitor-General. As Prior, the poet, was removed from the office of Commissioner of Trade, Marlborough procured for him a pension, and soothed his chagrin by every demonstration of personal regard—a kindness which the poet afterwards repaid with the blackest ingratitude. At the same time, the chiefs of the Tory party—the Duke of Buckingham, the Earls of Nottingham, Rochester, and Jersey, Lord Gown, and Sir George Rooke—were removed from the Privy Council. The administration was now in the main Whig—Harley and St John were the only Tories of note who retained any office under Government.¹

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53.

Marlborough's influence at length carries through the appointment.

¹ Coxe, iii. 132, 133.

Although, however, this great victory had been gained, and the united efforts of Godolphin, Marlborough, and the Duchess, supported by the whole strength of the Whig party, had prevailed over the sovereign, yet their

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54.

Continued
leaning of
the Queen
towards the
Tories.

power had received a severe shock ; and it was thenceforward rested at court on a very insecure basis. Like all persons of a weak character, Queen Anne was extremely jealous of any apparent encroachments on her authority ; and, while in reality entirely governed by the favourites around her, she dreaded nothing so much as to appear to be guided by their influence. To a sovereign of this disposition, nothing is so grating as to be openly compelled to recede before a party, and give public proof before all the world that the real power in the administration of affairs has been taken out of the royal hands. Having, after a violent and protracted resistance, been overthrown by the Whigs in this contest, Anne took refuge in secret cabal. She no longer resisted the dominant party in public : she surrendered the whole offices of state to their disposal ; but she lent in private a ready ear to the insinuations of their enemies, and eagerly credited the observations which Harley and St John were too skilful not to make, and which had too much foundation in truth, that she had become a mere puppet in the hands of the Whig nobility, and that Marlborough and Godolphin were the real sovereigns of England. These representations produced the more impression that they were in themselves, in a great degree, well founded, and made by St John, whose situation as Secretary at War gave him frequent access to her person, and enforced by all the ability which he and Harley possessed in so eminent a degree. When these feelings had once taken root in the royal breast, the very greatness of Marlborough, and the magnitude of his public services, became the most powerful instruments in working out his ruin, for they tended to augment jealousy at a power which was now regarded as over-

shadowing the throne. Queen Anne came, from the same jealousy at a party by whom the Crown was restrained, to be actuated by the same feeling which afterwards came to actuate George III. in his great contest with the Whigs on the India Bill in 1784, when Lord Thurlow said, "If this bill passes, nothing remains but to take the crown from the King's head, and place it on that of Mr Fox."¹

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¹ Alison's
Europe, c.
ix. § 36.
Coxe, iii.
247-253.

The secret inclinations of the Queen, though they no longer appeared in affairs of state, became ere long conspicuous in one particular. Zealously attached to High Church principles, she was anxious to fill the ecclesiastical dignities with persons of congenial sentiments, and to exclude those of ordinary principles, whom she regarded as little better than infidels; and having surrendered, contrary to her inclination, the whole political power into the hands of her public advisers, she thought she was entitled to consult her own wishes and the advice of her secret confidants in the disposal of ecclesiastical preferments. Two instances of this disposition, which revealed the existence of a secret influence, occurred in the course of the year 1708. The Queen refused to nominate Dr Potter to the situation of Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, though strongly recommended by Marlborough himself; and, instead, appointed Dr Trowbridge, who was a zealous adherent of the High Church party. And when the two sees of Exeter and Chester became vacant in the close of 1706, without making her intentions known to any of her ministers, she secretly promised them to Sir William Dawes and Dr Blackall, two zealous Tories, on whom they were afterwards conferred. To evade the remonstrances of Marlborough, she concealed her intentions till he had sailed for the

55.

Which appears in her ecclesiastical preferments.

CHAP. Continent in the spring of 1707. The Duke was soon
 V. after involved in a personal altercation with Lord
 1707. Halifax, a leading Whig, who, not content with the
 lucrative situation of Auditor of Exchequer, which he
 already held, openly aspired to that of joint plenipo-
 tentiary for the conclusion of a general peace, for which
 Marlborough well knew he was wholly disqualified. He
 therefore, in preference, recommended Lord Townsend,
 who soon after received the appointment.¹

¹ Lord Halifax to the Duchess of Marlborough, Mar. 28, 1707. Coxe, iii. 248-251.

56.
 Jealousy of
 the Whigs
 against
 Marlbo-
 rough and
 Godolphin.

These evident proofs of decline in their influence at court gave the greatest dissatisfaction to the leaders of the Whig party, the more especially as they occurred at a time when, from their recent victory in the appointment of Lord Sunderland, they expected to have the whole disposal of the patronage of all offices, both in Church and State. Ignorant of the secret influence which had in reality undermined that of Marlborough and Godolphin themselves in the breast of their sovereign, they visited all these disappointments on their heads, and openly charged them with being unfaithful to the interests of their party, and aiming at establishing, by a union with the Tories, a despotic power in their own persons, which might enable them to rule without the support either of the Crown or the people. When once the disappointed feelings of the Whigs took this direction in the breast of the leaders of their party, all Marlborough's greatness augmented the virulence of their feelings against him. His very victories, which had so signally augmented the glory and advanced the interests of his country, became the greatest eyesore in their sight; for they tended to make him independent of them, and enable him to rule for the general good of his country, not the advancement of their own

party in particular. And thus, by a curious but not unnatural combination of circumstances, working upon the universal selfishness of human nature, the very decline of Marlborough's influence at court tended to alienate him from his own party; and he became distrusted at once by his sovereign and his political supporters, from the very magnitude of the services he had rendered to them both, and to his country.¹

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1707.

¹ Coxe, iii.
249-251.

Matters were in this untoward state at court, when the Queen's breach with the Duchess of Marlborough was widened, and she was supplanted by a new favourite about the royal person, and, what is very remarkable, in consequence of the growing ascendancy of a person recommended by the Duchess herself. Worn out with the incessant fatigue of attendance on the royal person, which devolved on her from her situation of Mistress of the Robes, but which had become a very irksome duty since the favour of the Queen had begun to decline, the Duchess had recommended a poor relative of her own, named Abigail Hill, to relieve her of part of that laborious duty.* This young lady, who possessed considerable talents, and a strong relish for intrigue and elevation, had been educated in High Church and Tory principles, and she had not been long about the royal person before she began to acquire an influence over the Queen, who, like most of the sovereigns raised to a throne by a successful revolution, was in secret attached to those monarchical

57.
Rise of Abigail Hill,
and her
early history.

* Abigail Hill was the daughter of an eminent Turkey merchant, who having become bankrupt, his family was reduced to such straits that Abigail was glad to enter the service of Lady Revers, wife of Sir John Revers of Chafford, in Kent, from which humble situation she was raised by the kindness of the Duchess. Her letters in the Marlborough Papers are filled with the warmest expressions of gratitude to the Duchess, her first and greatest benefactress. It will appear in the sequel how she returned the obligation.—See Coxe, iii. 250, note.

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principles which they never desire to see in abeyance except when it is for their own elevation. She had been bred up in the school of adversity—an education which, beyond all others, qualifies for making the most of the sunshine of prosperity. Harley, whose ambition and spirit of intrigue were at least equal to her own, was not slow in perceiving the new source of influence thus opened up in the royal household, and a close alliance was soon established between them. These matters are not beneath the dignity of history; they are the secret agencies on which its most important changes sometimes depend. Abigail Hill soon after bestowed her hand on Mr Masham, who had also been placed in the Queen's household by the Duchess, and, under the name of MRS MASHAM, became the principal instrument in Marlborough's fall, and the main cause of the fruit of the glorious victories of the English general being lost by the treaty of Utrecht.¹

¹ Coxe, iii.
253-254.

58.
Her great
influence.

Though the ascendancy of Mrs Masham, and the treacherous part she was playing to her benefactress, had long been evident to others, yet the Duchess of Marlborough unaccountably continued blind to it. She could not believe that the creature of her bounty had joined in the league against her, any more than her husband could credit the treachery of Harley and St John, whom he had raised from the dust. Her marriage, however, opened the eyes of the Duchess; and soon after, the promotion of Dawes and Blackall, both avowed Tories, and not free from the imputation of Jacobitism, to the Episcopal bench, in opposition to the recommendation of Marlborough and Godolphin, gave convincing proof that their influence at court, in the disposal even of the highest offices, had been supplanted by that of the new

favourite. The consequences were highly prejudicial to Marlborough. The Whigs, who were not fully aware of this secret influence, who had long distrusted him on account of his former connection with James II., and envied him on account of his great services to the country, and the reputation he had so long enjoyed at court, now joined the Tories in bitter enmity against him. He was charged with protracting the war for his own private purposes ; and the man who had refused the government of the Netherlands, and £60,000 a-year, lest his acceptance should breed jealousies in the Alliance, was accused of checking the career of victory from sordid motives connected with the profits of the war. His brother, Admiral Churchill, who had adhered to the Tory principles of his family, and had imprudently censured Lord Galway and the conduct of the war in Spain, was prosecuted by Halifax and the Whigs on the charge of neglect of duty ; and the intercession of the Duke, though made in humble terms, was not so much as honoured with a reply. The consequences of this decline of court favour were soon apparent : recruits and supplies were forwarded to the army with a very scanty hand ; the military plans and proposals of the Duke were either overruled, or subjected to a rigid and often inimical examination ; and that division of responsibility and weakening of power became apparent, which is so often, in political as well as military transactions, the forerunner of disaster.¹

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¹ Coxe, iii.
257-259.

It would have required no ordinary prudence and address on the part of the Duchess, who was constantly at court, and exposed in person to these mortifications, to have kept her ground against so many concurring causes of alienation ; and, unfortunately for Marlborough,

59.
Imprudent
conduct of
the Duchess
at this crisis.

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and the general interests of Europe, these were precisely the qualities in which, with all her abilities, that very remarkable woman was wanting. Instead of endeavouring to regain her influence by increased kindness of conduct and suavity of manners, she did just the reverse; and, yielding to the impulse of passion, rather than the dictates of wisdom, widened the breach by continual reproaches to the Queen, which were the more hard to bear that they were felt to be in a great degree well founded. On the first intelligence of Abigail Hill's marriage to Mr Masham, which at once revealed the secret influence under which she had fallen, the Duchess burst into the royal presence, and, in the most bitter terms, reproached her with forwarding a union, and concealing a secret, which so nearly concerned her relations and dependants. An angry correspondence ensued, which, as usual, made matters worse :* and although, through Godolphin's interposition, an interview between the Duchess and Mrs Masham was brought about, it led to no reconciliation. In acting in this zealous but intemperate manner, even though she had reason and justice on her side, the Duchess evinced an entire ignorance of human nature. The transition is easy from love to hatred; for, strange as it may appear, these two violent passions are nearly allied, or rather easily turn into each other. It is indifference which is the real antidote to both.¹ The sunbeam of love rarely turns into the moon-

¹ Coxe, iii.
258-260.
Duchess of
Marlborough's
Letters.

* "I give my dear Mrs Freeman [Duchess] many thanks for her letter, which I received this morning, as I must always do for everything that comes from her, not doubting but what you say is sincerely meant in kindness to me. But I have so often been unfortunate in what I have said to you, that I think the less I say to your last letter the better: therefore, I shall only, in the first place, beg your pardon once more for what I said the other day, which I find you take ill, and say something in answer to the suspicions you seem to have concerning your

light of friendship. Affection may sometimes be recalled by prudence, or rewon by generosity, but it never yet was reconquered by violence, or resumed by complaint; and the only effect of bewailing that which has been lost is to prevent its ever being regained.

Marlborough and Godolphin in this crisis remained long, and, as it now appears to us, unaccountably blind to the dangers which threatened them. And when at length, by the repeated and urgent representations of the Duchess, their eyes were opened to the danger which threatened them, they acted rather a lofty and patriotic than a wise and sagacious part. They persisted in their endeavours to continue the policy which they had so long pursued, and which appears in numberless passages of the correspondence of both, of ruling without being swayed by either party, and deserving well of the sovereign, and obtaining the confidence of the nation by attending only to the public good, without yielding to the demands of the keen party on either side. In pursuance of this system, they neither acted cordially with the Whigs in taking measures to extinguish the rising cabal, nor did they fall in with the secret wishes of the Queen, and unite with the Tories. They persisted in keeping Harley and St John in the Government, although they were the very leaders of the intrigue against them, and Marlborough even went so far as to advise Godolphin to carry Harley with him—a decisive

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60.

Dignified
but unwise
conduct of
Godolphin
and Marl-
borough at
this crisis.

cousin Hill, who is very far from being an occasion of feeding Mrs Morley [Queen] in her passion, as you are pleased to call it, she never meddling with anything. I believe others that have been in her station, in former times, have been tattling, and very impertinent; but she is not at all of that temper: and as for the company she keeps, it is with her as most other people: their lot in the world makes them move with some out of civility rather than choice."—*Queen Anne to Duchess of Marlborough*, July 18, 1707: COXE, iii. 259.

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¹ Coxe, iii.
263-266.

proof that they wished to govern independent of party.* It is hard to say whether such a project, or the Duchess's hope of regaining her influence over the Queen by petulance and complaints, evinces the most ignorance of human nature.¹

61.
Reasons of
its failure.

The theory of governing by the promotion of merit without distinction of party, and of being regulated only by the public good, sounds well, and has often captivated the most noble and generous of men. But it has never yet succeeded in practice ; and every government attempted on such a basis has speedily gone to pieces on the first serious crisis. The reason is, that it runs directly contrary to the prevailing selfishness of human nature. The public weal, in every one's mouth, is in the hearts of a mere fraction of mankind, whose numbers are much too inconsiderable to form a government. Individual interest is the ruling principle of the vast majority in every rank ; and as no government can long exist without the support of the majority, the foundations of power must always be laid in the interests of some great class of society, or party, in the state. The vast majority of men, in secret, conscious that they have no chance of promotion on the score of merit, dread nothing so much as a government based on the claims of ability, irrespective of party. Aristocratic families wish to have talent on their side, but they wish to have it in a proper state of subordination to themselves, and entirely devoted

* " That which gives me the greatest trouble is what you say concerning the Queen ; for if Mrs Morley's prejudice in favour of some people is so unalterable, and that she will be disposing of the preferments now vacant to such as will tear to pieces her friends and servants, that must create distraction. But you know my opinion was, and still is, that *you ought to take with you Mr Secretary Harley*, and to let the Queen see, with all the freedom and plainness imaginable, her true interest ; and when she is sensible of that, there will be no more difficulty : if there should, you will have performed

to their purposes. The common saying, that "an independent man is a man that cannot be depended upon," proves how generally these feelings are prevalent in the world. Every man practically acquainted with public affairs must have observed that projects of amelioration calculated for the general good, irrespective of party or class interest, excite very little attention, and generally fail, not so much from the strength of the opposition they meet with, as the feebleness of the support they receive. It is measures calculated for party or class elevation that alone either receive cordial support or encounter formidable opposition. A government based, like that of Godolphin and Marlborough, on the general good, irrespective of factions, may be an object of admiration to posterity, which is beyond the interests of the moment ; but it is sure to lose the confidence of the present, which is entirely governed by it ; and, in public lauded by all, it will be in reality supported by none.

Matters were in this untoward state at the court of St James's, with the sovereign coerced, the Whigs jealous, the Tories caballing, when Marlborough in the middle of November returned from the Hague to London. The outcry immediately became absolutely stunning, and it was hard to say whether the Whigs or the Tories were most active in promoting it. The failure before Toulon, the disasters in Spain, the nullity of the campaign in Flanders, were made the subject of the

your duty, and God's will be done. For my own part, I see in almost every country they act so extremely against their own interest, that I fear we deserve to be punished. I will endeavour to serve to the best of my understanding, and then submit with much resignation to the pleasure of God, whose mercies I am very sensible of. I hope and beg you will take a proper time of letting the Queen know my heart and firm resolution, as soon as the war is at an end, to be master of myself, that I may have time and quiet to reconcile myself to God."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, iii. 265, 263.

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62.
Vehement
outcry
against
Marlbo-
rough both
in and out of
Parliament.

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most acrimonious complaints both in and out of Parliament. Then was seen the general and ineradicable selfishness of human nature, and the tendency of greatness to excite jealousy, of obligations conferred to breed ingratitude. For

“ Envy does merit, as its shade, pursue,
And, like the shade, confess the substance true.”

Everything was imputed to Marlborough; all the discomfitures which had been experienced were visited on his devoted head. It was his neglect which occasioned the disaster of Almanza; it was his advice which prompted the calamitous invasion of Provence; it was his cupidity which protracted the war in the Netherlands. Lord Peterborough augmented the general excitement by the most exaggerated statement of his own brilliant exploits, and of the wrongs—some real, some imaginary—which he had experienced. He even offered to return to Spain and serve under Lord Galway till that monarchy was finally rescued from the Bourbons. “ We should give the Queen,” said he, “ nineteen shillings in the pound, rather than make peace on any other terms.” Lord Rochester even went so far in the House of Peers as to propose that they should draft fifteen or twenty thousand men from Flanders, reducing the war merely to one of defence in that quarter, and with them reinforce the army in Catalonia.¹

¹ Parl. Hist. Dec. 19, 1707; and Coxe, iv. 1, 11.

63.
Speech of Marlborough against drafting men from Flanders.

It was easy to see, from the acrimony of these debates, that, although the disasters of the present year were the subject of complaint, it was the triumphs of the preceding which formed the real subject of vexation; and that, although Almanza and Toulon were in men’s mouths, Blenheim and Ramilies were the real injuries which they could not forgive. Marlborough was too good a public

servant to reveal the real cause of the nullity of the campaign in the Netherlands, or to endanger the Alliance with Holland, by disclosing the factious conduct of its deputies; but he remonstrated strongly, and in the most conclusive manner, against the proposal to weaken the army in Flanders, in order to reinforce that in Spain. "The first reason," he observed, "which induces me to object to this proposal is, that in Spain most of the enemy's strong places may be kept with one battalion in each; whereas the strong fortresses in Brabant, which I have reduced, require twenty times that number for their preservation: secondly, if our army in the Netherlands be weakened, and the French gain any considerable advantage there, the discontented party in Holland, who are not a few, and who bear with impatience the great charges of the war, will not fail to cry aloud for peace. Although it is improper to disclose secret projects in so numerous an assembly, because the enemy will not fail to be informed of them, yet I am authorised by the Queen to gratify your lordships, by the assurance that measures have been already concerted with the Emperor for forming an army of forty thousand men, under the command of the Duke of Savoy, and of sending succours to King Charles in Spain. It is also to be hoped that Prince Eugene may be induced to take the command in Spain, in which case the Germans will gladly follow him. The only difficulty which may be objected to this scheme is the usual tardiness of the court of Vienna; and it must be admitted, that, if the seven thousand recruits which the Emperor promised for Piedmont had arrived in time, the enterprise against Toulon would probably have been attended with success. But I dare engage my word that, for the future, his Imperial Majesty will

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punctually perform his promises." These explanations were deemed so satisfactory that the opposition died away: even Rochester observed — "Had we known sooner how well all things had been managed, this debate might have been spared;" and the debate terminated in a resolution, which was unanimously adopted—"That no peace could be reasonable or safe, either for her Majesty or her Allies, if Spain and the West Indies were suffered to remain in the power of the house of Bourbon;" and a recommendation to the Queen to send succours to the army in Spain, and request them from the Emperor for those in Piedmont and on the Rhine.¹

¹ Parl. Hist.
Dec. 19,
1707. Coxe,
iv. 11-15.

64.
Circum-
stances
which occa-
sioned a sus-
picion of
Harley.

This unanimity on the subject of the war was the prelude to a change in the administration, than which none was more reluctantly acquiesced in or deeply regretted by Marlborough. This was the downfall of Secretary Harley. An abhorrence of party connection, a just dread of the rapacious and grasping disposition of the Whigs, who would be satisfied with nothing less than an entire monopoly of all the offices of State, respect and gratitude to the Queen, to whom he was known to be eminently acceptable, as well as a high sense of his own integrity and abilities, had rendered Marlborough as well as Godolphin hitherto blind to the notorious intrigues of this able and ambitious man at court, as well as reluctant to disturb the peace of the administration by any proposal for his dismissal. They had even gone so far as to have, at his own request, an interview with Harley, in which he laboured to convince them of his fidelity, and for a time succeeded. But soon after, a discovery was made of a secret and treasonable correspondence carried on by one Gregg, a clerk in the office of Harley, with Chamillard, the French secretary of state. In consequence of

this discovery, Gregg was arrested on the 30th December, and brought to trial, when he was convicted on his own confession. About the same time, it was discovered that two smugglers, Vallière and Bern, whom Harley had employed to procure intelligence from Calais and Boulogne, had profited by the information they had received to convey it to the enemy.¹

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1708.

¹ Cox, iv.
21, 22.

Although these revelations did not directly implicate Harley in privy with these treasonable practices, and although Gregg, who was long respited with a view to extract from him a fuller confession, persisted to the very last, and in a solemn dying declaration, in exculpating him from any participation in his guilt, yet these concurring circumstances contributed to strengthen the accusations of the Whigs, and violently agitated the public mind. Their suspicions were increased, and their enmity much enhanced, by the discovery that Harley had appealed to the Duke of Buckingham to bring about a coalition between the leading men of both parties, and had urged the Queen, in conjunction with Mrs Masham, to send messages to the leading Tories, calling on them to join her in emancipating the Crown from the arrogant domination of the Whigs. Reports of the approaching formation of a new ministry were industriously circulated, and increased the general excitement. These circumstances convinced Godolphin of his danger, and he took his determination. Before the end of January 1708, the Attorney-General communicated to Harley the intelligence that he had fallen under the displeasure of the Lord Treasurer. He immediately appealed to Marlborough as his friend and patron, who accorded to him a private interview, in which he recounted all the circumstances on which their suspicions were founded. Harley endea-

65.
Godolphin
breaks with
Harley.

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¹Hardwicke
Papers.
Somerville's
Queen
Anne, 628.

66.
Godolphin
and Marl-
borough
threaten to
resign.

voured to exculpate himself, in a long and laboured letter to Godolphin ; but the brief and cutting reply of the Lord Treasurer showed that reconciliation had become hopeless :—" I have received your letter, and am very sorry for what has happened to lose the good opinion I had so much inclination to have of you ; but I cannot help seeing nor believing the evidence of my senses. I am very far from having deserved it of you. God forgive you."¹

Matters were now evidently approaching a crisis, and as the Queen continued firm in support of Harley, and the report of a new administration became more current, the Whigs saw that a decisive step had become necessary. They therefore had a meeting, and conveyed to Marlborough an assurance of their cordial and zealous support ; and, to evince their resolution of pushing to the utmost their hostility to Harley, they appointed a committee of seven Whig lords to examine Gregg and the two smugglers, in order, if possible, to elicit something from them which might implicate the Secretary. Still, however, the Queen stood firm, and Marlborough upon that gave proof of the firmness as well as consistency of his character. He had often said that he would stand or fall with Godolphin ; and now was the time to put it to the test. He wrote, accordingly, a firm but respectful letter to the Queen, in which, after declaring his conviction that Harley had been concerned in treasonable practices, and recapitulating the vain endeavours he had made to convince her Majesty of that melancholy truth, he declared that neither Godolphin nor he would longer act with him, and that, so long as she continued him in office, he must consider himself as forced out of it.^{1*}

¹ Coxe, iv.
24, 25.

* " Madam, - Since all the faithful services I have endeavoured to do you, and the unwearied pains I have taken for these ten days to satisfy and con-

Even this alarming announcement did not shake the firmness of the Queen, who, to the hereditary obstinacy of the Stuart race, united a full share of the exalted ideas of the royal prerogative, which, unhappily for them, were equally inherent in their blood, and had brought her grandfather Charles I. to the block. She continued Harley in office, accordingly; and made the utmost exertions, in private interviews, to dissuade Marlborough from his purpose. He remained equally firm, however, repeating his determination, amidst earnest protestations of his loyalty and devotion to her Majesty, to stand or fall with Godolphin. Still the Queen held out; and at a Cabinet Council, summoned on the 9th February, Harley took his seat in presence of the sovereign, Godolphin and Marlborough being absent. Great consternation pervaded the Cabinet, and for some time nothing was said; but at length the Duke of Somerset rose and observed—"I do not see how we can deliberate when the Lord Treasurer and the Commander-in-Chief are absent." No one gainsaid the observation, which evidently conveyed the sense of the great majority of the meeting. Harley turned pale, but said nothing. The

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67.

The Queen
at length
yields, and
Harley is
dismissed.

vince your Majesty's mind, I have not been able to give you any such impressions of Mr Secretary Harley to Lord Treasurer and myself, but that your Majesty is pleased to countenance and to support him, to the ruin of your business at home; I am very much afraid it will be attended with the sorrow and amazement of all Europe, as soon as the noise of it gets abroad. And I find myself obliged to have so much regard to my own honour and reputation, as not to be every day made a sacrifice to falsehood and treachery, but most humbly to acquaint your Majesty that no consideration can make me serve any longer with that man. And I beseech your Majesty to look upon me, from this moment, as *forced out of your service*, as long as you think fit to continue him in it. No heart is fuller of duty to your Majesty than mine: nobody has more sincere wishes for your prosperity, nor shall more constantly pray for your Majesty's long life, and for your happiness both here and hereafter."—*Marlborough to Queen Anne*, Feb. 8, 1708; COXE, iv. 24.

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1708.

Queen, upon this, broke up the council, with the strongest marks of anger, alarm, and disappointment. This result having transpired, the agitation of the public mind became extreme; expressions of concern and alarm were heard in both houses of Parliament; and the House of Commons allowed a bill of supply, ordered for the next day, to lie on the table. Still, however, the Queen refused to dismiss him; but at length Harley, seeing he could not carry on the government against the whole body of the Whigs, tendered his resignation, which, at the earnest entreaties of the Prince of Denmark, who dreaded a convulsion in the state, the Queen accepted. She sent for Marlborough, and, after some bitter expostulations, informed him that Harley should retire from her service. His place was filled by Mr Boyle, a zealous Whig; Mr Smith was made Chancellor of the Exchequer; St John, who also resigned, was succeeded as Secretary at War by Mr Robert Walpole; and the office of Comptroller of the Household, in lieu of Mansell, who retired, was conferred on the Earl of Cholmondeley, all zealous adherents of the Whig party.¹

¹ Conduct of Duchess of Marlborough, 253. Burnet, v. 375. Coxe, iv. 25, 26.

68.
Unexpected results of the triumph of the Whigs.

The Tories were now entirely rooted out of the cabinet; the dream of Godolphin and Marlborough—worthy of their noble and generous nature, but little adapted to the selfishness of human nature, of governing for the public good without reference to party—was dissipated, and the government was conducted entirely on a Whig basis. To all appearance the victory of that party was complete: the Crown had been overthrown by them in two pitched battles; Sunderland had been forced into the cabinet, and Harley forced out of it, in spite of the utmost efforts of the sovereign to exclude the one and retain the other. The majority of the nation had

gone cordially along with the Whigs in both struggles ; both Houses of Parliament had supported them in their efforts to crush their opponents ; the Queen, to all appearance, was in fetters, from which she had no means, during the remainder of her life, of escaping. Yet from these very events may be dated the commencement of a series of causes and effects which, in their ultimate results, overturned the Whig government, occasioned the downfall of Marlborough's power, robbed the nation of the whole fruit of his glorious victories, at the moment of its utmost distress re-established the tottering throne of Louis XIV., and forfeited the main objects of the war by confirming the crown of Spain to the house of Bourbon ! So often in real life, as well as in the imagination of the poet, does ambition overvault itself, and fall down on the other side.

However much, at particular times, and under the influence of the excitement produced by causes which heat the nation in the pursuit of political power, the English people may for a short period be alienated from their sovereigns, there is a fund of loyalty in the depths of their bosoms which ere long recovers its influence, and makes itself felt in an unmistakable manner by their rulers. When these feelings of reviving devotion to the throne are combined with the equally strong aversion of the nation to long-continued and heavy taxation, it seldom fails ere long to produce a tempest which no government, how strongly soever founded in aristocratic support, is capable of withstanding. The remaining years of Marlborough's life at home exhibit nothing but the increasing force and at length irresistible weight of these circumstances. The Crown had been openly and publicly constrained, on two important occasions, by the

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1703.

69.

Inherent
loyalty and
aversion to
taxation in
the English
people the
cause of
this.

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V.
1708.

Whig nobility ; a ministry imposed upon it contrary to the declared and earnest wishes of the sovereign ; and a burdensome war continued, as they thought, for no other reason but to gratify the ambition or augment the profits of its military head. Writers of talent, adequate to make the most of these popular topics, were not wanting on the Tory side : St John and Swift had powers equal to the popularising of less popular ones ; and the event, equally with the resurrection of the nation against aristocratic domination when attempted against George III. in 1784, proves how perilous is such a system of coercion, and how short-lived may be the power of its authors.

70.
The Queen
in court is
ruled by
Harley
and Mrs
Masham.

Wounded alike in her pride and her feelings by the open restraint thus repeatedly placed by the Whig ministry on her inclinations, Queen Anne took refuge in private and secret partialities. She made no open resistance to her ministers ; she submitted to everything which they chose to dictate ; she acquiesced in all their appointments of their adherents to every office under Government. But she was irrevocably alienated from them ; she yielded only to dire necessity ; in secret she was already devising the means of their destruction. Dismissed from her councils by the strength of his political opponents, Harley was only on that account the more confirmed in her confidence ; Mrs Masham became the *confidante* of her sorrows, and St John and the disgraced secretary the chiefs of a secret cabinet council, by the advice of which the whole subsequent measures of the sovereign were directed. As the apprehensions of the Whigs with regard to this secret influence were excessive, her interviews with Harley and St John were conducted with the utmost precaution to avoid observation ; it was like the stolen meetings of a husband with

a favourite mistress, which he is desirous of keeping from the knowledge of a jealous wife. These stolen interviews, however, could not escape the Argus eyes of the Duchess of Marlborough, who thus expressed herself regarding them. "To enjoy," says her Grace, "in privacy the gossip, for it could not be called society, of Mrs Masham, and the flattery of Harley, she staid all the sultry season of 1708, even when the Prince was panting for breath, in that small house she had formerly purchased at Windsor, which though hot as an oven was then said to be cool, because from the Park such persons as Mrs Masham had a mind to bring to her Majesty could be let in privately from the garden."¹

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1708.

¹ Conduct of Duchess of Marlborough, 222. Mrs Thompson's Life of Duchess, ii. 150.

The credit of the Whig party and of Marlborough, which had been shaken in the estimation of a considerable part of the nation by this open coercion of the sovereign, was much raised in the spring of 1708, by the success of the measures which they adopted to screen the country from an invasion from France, and all the horrors of a civil conflict. Desirous of retaliating upon England the insult which the Allied armies had inflicted upon France by the invasion of Provence, Louis XIV. now made serious preparations for the invasion of Great Britain, with the avowed object of re-establishing the Chevalier of St George, the heir of James II., on the throne from which that unhappy monarch had been expelled. The court of St Germain had received secret assurances of support from the Duke of Hamilton, and a large part of the Scotch nobility, who had promised to bring thirty thousand men into the field as soon as their sovereign landed in Scotland. The Pretender left St Germain after taking an affectionate leave of Louis XIV., with £250,000 in Louis d'ors,

71.

Defeat of the Pretender's attempted invasion of Scotland, March 1708.

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1708.

and large supplies of arms and ammunition, with which he arrived at Dunkirk, where a squadron was prepared for his reception. But the energy of the Government was equal to the emergency. Under Marlborough's able direction, to whom, as commander-in-chief, the defensive measures were intrusted, everything was soon put in a train to avert the threatened danger. Scotland was the scene where an outbreak was to be apprehended, and accordingly all the disposable forces of the empire, including ten battalions brought over from Flanders, were quickly sent to that country. The *habeas corpus* act was suspended. Edinburgh Castle was strongly garrisoned, and the British squadron so skilfully disposed in the North Seas, that, when the Chevalier with a French squadron put to sea, he was so closely watched that, after vainly attempting to land, both in the Firth of Forth and the neighbourhood of Inverness, he was obliged to return to Dunkirk. This auspicious event entirely restored Marlborough's credit with the nation, and dispelled every remnant of suspicion with which the Whigs regarded him in relation to the exiled family; and though his influence with the court was secretly undermined, his power, to outward appearance, was unbounded. He resumed in consequence the command of the army in the beginning of April 1708, with authority as paramount as he had enjoyed on any former occasion.¹

¹ Berwick's
Memoirs, ii.
101-107.
Coxe, iv.
31-41.
European
History,
1708, p. 104.
Lockhart
Papers, i.
272-291.

72.
Design of
the Duchess
of Marlbo-
rough to
retire from
Court.

Although, however, the Duke was, to outward appearance, entirely reinstated in favour, yet it could not escape the vigilant eye of female jealousy that the royal favour was irrecoverably lost. A few days before Harley's dismissal, the Duchess waited on the Queen; and after the usual complaints of the loss of her regard, she added, "As Lord Marlborough is now about to be forced

from your service, I cannot in honour remain longer at Court." The Queen was moved by this announcement: her old friendship for the companion of her youth for a time revived; and she repeatedly said, with much apparent kindness, "You and I must never part." She even went so far as to say, that, if the Duchess should feel herself obliged to retire, she would transfer her offices to two of her daughters—a promise which, after Harley's dismissal, she renewed in writing. But this reconciliation was in appearance only, not in reality. The seeds of division were irrevocably sown between them. The Duchess found her situation at Court so uncomfortable, from the continued presence and obvious influence of Mrs Masham, that at the end of March, when Marlborough set out for Holland, she wrote to the Queen, announcing her retirement to the country, at the same time reminding her of the promise given in favour of her daughters.* After this the Queen and the Duchess never met except on state occasions, when it could not be avoided; and when they did it was in sullen silence, or with mutual and angry reproaches or ironical apologies. Mrs Thompson, who, in her entertaining life of the Duchess, recounts those female jars, says that "it is one peculiarity of her sex that affliction, once withdrawn, cannot by reasoning, persuasion, or even concession, be renewed."¹ Certain it is that, in this instance at

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¹ Thompson's Life of the Duchess, ii. 153. Conduct, 222-254. Coxe, iv. 42-45.

* "Madam,—Upon Lord Marlborough going into Holland, I believe your Majesty will be neither surprised nor displeased to hear I am gone into the country, since, by your very hard and uncommon usage of me, you have convinced all sorts of people, as well as myself, that nothing could be so uneasy to you as my near attendance. Upon this account, I think it not improper, at my going into the country, if your Majesty think fit to dispose of my employments, according to the solemn assurances you have given to me, you shall meet with all the submission and acknowledgments imaginable." —*Duchess of Marlborough to Queen Anne*, 31st March 1708; COXE, iv. 45.

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1708.

least, it never was renewed; and that the mutual coldness and irritation which succeeded, added not a little to the difficulties of Marlborough and Godolphin, and had no inconsiderable share in producing their fall.

73.
Flagrant
ingratitude
of Mrs
Masham
and all her
relations to
the Duchess
of Marlbo-
rough.

What greatly aggravated the vexation which the Duchess experienced, from these crosses and mortifications, was the reflection that they almost all proceeded from the ascendancy of a family which she herself had raised from the dust. Not only Abigail Hill herself owed her whole elevation to her kindness, but all her family were the creatures of her bounty, or fed by her hands. The Duchess procured for her mother the situation of bedchamber-woman to the Princess of Denmark, and a pension of £200 a-year for her younger sister. All her brothers were provided with situations by her influence; and her husband, Mr Masham, owed his elevation entirely to her kindness: he was first made a page, then an equerry, and at last a groom of the chamber, to the Prince, at her request. There can be no doubt that the selfish dispositions rapidly grow and flourish in the warm atmosphere of a court, where so many glittering objects of ambition present themselves to draw them forth; but it is to be feared that this ungrateful conduct, on the part of Mrs Masham, was but a specimen of the ordinary and average disposition of human nature in that respect. Gratitude is one of the first of the generous affections, and, unhappily, it is perhaps the rarest. It is easier to find one who will confer a kindness, than one who will either acknowledge or feel it. By the selfish, the most generous acts are received as a matter of course; in most cases, the conferring of benefits excites only a secret feeling of animosity against the giver. The reason is, that it mortifies the self-love of the receiver. The

conferring a kindness is attended with the opposite feeling ; it in secret gratifies self-love, because it implies a superiority, at least in worldly advantages, over the person benefited by the bounty. To overcome this feeling, and acknowledge a kindness, is perhaps the greatest effort of a generous mind, because it implies the greatest oblivion of the selfish dispositions ; and nothing is more certain than that none feel gratitude for kindness except those who, in similar circumstances, would be capable of conferring it.¹

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V.
1703.

¹ Thompson's Life of Duchess, ii. 36-91. Conduct, 219-224.

From the preceding detail of the causes which alienated the Queen from the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and paved the way for the fall of the Whig ministry, and an entire change in the foreign policy of England, it may be judged how erroneous and superficial is the idea commonly entertained, that it was the result merely of female partiality, and brought about by a bed-chamber intrigue. That they were the ultimate agents in the change, and, to outward appearance, its immediate precursors, is indeed true. But they were very far from being the real causes. If we would discover these, we must look for them in the previous arrogant domination and grasping disposition of the whole Whig party, of which the Duchess of Marlborough was the faithful representative. Not content with having the majority in the cabinet, the control of the palace, and the disposal of all the civil and military offices in the kingdom, they aspired to nothing less than exclusive monopoly, and aimed incessantly at rooting out every one but their own certain adherents in every department of the state. They would not allow the Queen the appointment of her own maids of honour, far less of her bishops or secretaries of state. They made no allowance for individual partiality,

74.
The grasping disposition of the Whigs was the real cause of the change.

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V.
1708.

female preference, or domestic peace ; but were in an agony of apprehension, and considered themselves seriously slighted, if every office, from the highest to the lowest, was not exclusively appropriated to their nominees. It is not likely that any sovereign, except an absolute fool, would long submit, save from necessity, to such dictation ; least of all was it to be expected in one who inherited the obstinacy and high ideas of prerogative which characterised the Stuart race. It was the forcing of Sunderland on her which made the Queen cling to Harley—the arrogance of the Duchess of Marlborough which paved the way for the influence of Mrs Masham.

75.
It was the
Revolution
which occa-
sioned this
grasping
disposition
in the
Whigs.

Marlborough and Godolphin's favourite system of governing for the public good, without reference to party, and steering clear of the extremes on either side, which led them so long to retain St John and Harley, the able leaders of the Tories, in the cabinet, could not long be carried on when their chief supporters belonged to such a party. It alienated their friends more than it conciliated their enemies, because it thwarted the selfish dispositions of the first, and did not adequately gratify the selfish hopes of the last. We are not to ascribe this extraordinary thirst for aggrandisement, and the exclusive enjoyment of office, to any peculiar selfishness of the Whigs beyond other men : it arose from the necessities of their situation ; it was the consequence of previous political crimes. How necessary soever the Revolution undoubtedly was, to free the nation from Romish tyranny and consequent ruin, it could not be disguised that it had been brought about, on the part of many at least, by treachery and treason. No established government can be violently overthrown by any other means. The Whig leaders, and none more than Marlborough,

stood foremost in these crimes ; for they had deserted their sovereign while holding office under him. It was a secret consciousness of this which impelled Halifax, Somers, and the Duchess of Marlborough, into a series of such grasping measures : they anticipated from a change of ministry not merely the ruin of their ascendancy as a party, but the punishment of themselves as individuals. They were haunted by the same perpetual dread of a reaction as the Jacobins of France were of a counter-revolution ; and deemed it as necessary to their own safety that every office in the state should be filled by their adherents, as Robespierre and Murat did that two hundred thousand heads should fall. Thence their arrogance, their exclusive system, their ambition, their fall. Another proof, among the many which history furnishes, that there is a moral government of the world, not less in the affairs of nations than in those of private life ; that the instruments by which Providence brings it about are the acts of free agents ; and that the chief means by which punishment is at last brought down upon the guilty parties is the system which they themselves pursue to avert it.

CHAPTER VI.

CAMPAIGN OF 1708.—SURPRISE OF GHENT AND BRUGES BY THE FRENCH.
 —BATTLE OF OUDENARDE.—SIEGE AND FALL OF LILLE.—RECOVERY
 OF GHENT AND BRUGES BY MARLBOROUGH.

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1.
 Motives
 which in-
 duced Marl-
 borough to
 desire an
 active cam-
 paign.

THE narrow escape which Marlborough had made from political shipwreck at the close of the preceding year, and the certainty that, with the accession of a new ministry to the direction of affairs in Great Britain, its foreign policy would be entirely changed, a peace concluded, and all the objects for which he had so strenuously contended be lost, rendered him doubly anxious to signalise the next campaign by some brilliant exploits. Although there could be no doubt that envy of his great achievements was the real cause of the hostility with which he was surrounded at home, and Blenheim and Ramilies the real eyesores to the opposite faction, yet their stalking-horse was the failures and unsatisfactory issue of the preceding campaign. It was this which augmented the clamour for peace, and envenomed the shafts which were directed against himself. His situation had now become so critical that continued success in the field had become the condition, not merely of influence abroad, but of political existence at home ; and it was evident that any considerable reverse, or even another nugatory campaign in Flanders, would in

all probability not only dissolve the Grand Alliance, and defeat all the objects of the war, but place a new administration at the head of affairs in Great Britain, and possibly seat another dynasty on the throne.

Everything announced a more important campaign than the preceding had proved in the Low Countries. Encouraged by the little progress which the Allies had made in the former campaign, Louis XIV. had been induced to make the most vigorous efforts to accumulate a preponderating force, and re-establish his affairs in that quarter. Vendôme's army had, by great exertion, been raised to a hundred thousand men, including the detached force under M. de la Mothe ; and at the same time secret communications were opened with a considerable portion of the inhabitants in some of the frontier fortresses of Brabant, in order to induce them, on the first favourable opportunity, to surrender their strongholds to the French arms. The unpopularity of the Dutch authorities in those towns, the enormous pecuniary exactions to which their inhabitants were exposed, and the open pretensions which they put forth of wresting them from the Emperor, and delivering them over at a general peace to the hated rule of Protestant Holland, rendered those advances peculiarly acceptable. Vendôme's instructions were to act on the offensive, though in a cautious manner ; to push forward in order to take advantage of these favourable dispositions, and endeavour to regain the important ground which had been lost during the panic that had followed the battle of Ramillies. The Duke of Berwick had been recalled from Spain, where the contest appeared to be virtually decided in favour of the Bourbon dynasty, and appointed to the command, under the Elector of Bavaria, of the

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2.
Vigorous
preparations
made by
Louis XIV.
for the cam-
paign in the
Low Coun-
tries.

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¹ Berwick's
Mem. ii.
Hist. Mil.
viii. 2-6.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
310, 311.

army on the Lower Rhine, thirty-five thousand strong, where he was opposed to Prince Eugene, who commanded the Imperialists in that quarter, of nearly equal force. The nominal command of the army in the Netherlands was bestowed on the Duke of Burgundy ; but the Duke of Vendôme was second in command, and intrusted with the real direction. With him also were the Duke de Berri, the Pretender, who bore the modest title of the Chevalier of St George, and the flower of the French nobility.¹

3.
Prepara-
tions and
forces of the
Allies in
Flanders.

On their side the Allies had not been idle ; and preparations had been made for transferring the weight of the contest to the Low Countries. The war in Italy being in a manner terminated by the entire expulsion of the French from that peninsula, and by the secret convention for a kind of suspension of active operations in that quarter, Prince Eugene had been brought to the theatre of real hostilities on the northern frontier of France. He and Marlborough met at the Hague on the 12th April, and the two heroes immediately and cordially concerted the plan of their operations. Marlborough on every occasion gave him the precedence ; and the most perfect unanimity prevailed in their deliberations. It was agreed between them that two great armies should be formed—one in Brabant under the former, and the other on the Moselle under the latter ; that the Elector of Hanover should act on the defensive on the Rhine ; that Eugene should join the English general, and that with their united force they should compel the French general to accept battle. This well-conceived plan having met with the usual resistance on the part of the Allied powers, Marlborough, accompanied by Prince Eugene, was com-

pelled to repair in person to Hanover, to smooth over the objections of its Elector. Meanwhile the dissensions and difficulties of the cabinet in London increased to such a degree, that he had scarcely quitted England when he was urged by Godolphin, and the majority of his own party, to return, as the only means of saving them from shipwreck. Marlborough, however, with that patriotic spirit which ever distinguished him, and not less than his splendid abilities formed so honourable a feature in his character, refused to leave the seat of war, and left his political friends to shift for themselves as they best could. Having obtained a promise from Eugene that he would meet him before the month expired, he joined the army at Ghent on the 9th May 1708, and on the same day reviewed the British division stationed in that city.¹

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
311. Coxe,
iv. 54-60.
Marlbo-
rough to
Godolphin,
May 8 19,
1708. Coxe,
iv. 74, 75.

In addition to the domestic reasons which led him to wish for an opportunity to signalise the next campaign by some decisive action, reasons of an equally pressing kind existed from the temper and disposition of the principal parties in Holland. No sooner had Marlborough arrived there, than he was assailed by representations from the leading men of the country as to the necessity of concluding a peace, with open declarations that, if this was not done by the Allies jointly, the States would be under the necessity of making a separate accommodation. * These statements were the more

4.
The Dutch
are anxious
for a sepa-
rate peace.

* "The town of Amsterdam, which has always been the most zealous for the carrying on of the war with vigour, has pressed me in two conferences by their Burgomaster and Pensioner for the making steps towards a peace, which I think not for the honour or interest of your character. I have reason to believe that this change of theirs does not proceed from the apprehensions they have of France, but from what passed in England last winter, and from the continued intelligence they have of your Majesty being

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worthy of attention that they came from the town of Amsterdam, and the government which had hitherto been most zealous for the prosecution of the war. The reason of this was very apparent. They were no strangers to the change going on in England, and the influence which Harley and Mrs Masham had obtained in the secret councils of the Queen ; and they were in consequence apprehensive of the downfall of Marlborough's power, and with it of the whole fabric of the Grand Alliance. In such an event they well knew their ruin would be certain, from being singly exposed to the blows and the vengeance of the King of France. To avert such a calamity, they were desirous, while it was yet in their power, to come to terms of accommodation ; and if it could not be done in concert with their allies, they were determined to conclude a separate peace for themselves.¹

¹ Marlborough to Queen Anne, May 9, 1708. Coxe, iv. 75.

5.
Vendôme's
movements
to aid a
revolt in
Antwerp.

May 23.

An event soon occurred which showed how widespread were the intrigues of the French in the Flemish towns, how insecure was the foundation on which the authority of the Allies rested there, and how little might expose the Dutch to the whole calamities which they were so anxious to avert by a general pacification. An accidental circumstance led to the discovery of a letter put into the post-office of Ghent, containing the whole particulars of a plan for admitting the French troops into the citadel of Antwerp. Vendôme, at the same time, made a forward movement from Mons, to take advantage of these attempts ; but Marlborough was on

resolved to change hands and parties. They being sensible of the fatal consequences this may have in the next parliament is the true reason of their being earnest to have propositions of peace made this campaign."—*Marlborough to Queen Anne*, May 9, 1708 ; COXE, iv. 75.

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his guard, and both frustrated the intended rising in Antwerp, and, by taking post in advance of Halle, between Tubise and Herfelingen, barred the way against the attempted advance of the French army. Disconcerted by the failure of this enterprise, Vendôme moved to Soignies at the head of a hundred thousand men, where he halted at the distance of three leagues from the Allied armies. A great and decisive action was confidently expected in both armies; as, although Marlborough could not muster above seventy thousand combatants, it was well known he would not shun a battle, although he was not as yet sufficiently strong to assume the offensive. Vendôme, however, declined attacking the Allies where they stood, and, filing to the right to Braine-le-Leude, close to the field of Waterloo, again halted in a position threatening at once both Louvain and Brussels. Moving parallel to him, but still keeping on the defensive, Marlborough retired to Anderlecht. No sooner had May 25. he arrived there, than intelligence was received of a farther movement to the right on the part of the French general, which indicated an intention to make Louvain the object of attack. Without losing an instant, Marlborough marched on that very night with the utmost expedition, amidst torrents of rain, to Parc, where he established himself in a position covering that fortress, of such strength that Vendôme, finding himself anticipated in his movements, fell back to Braine-le-Leude without firing a shot.¹

¹ Marl.
Des. iv. 49.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
315-317.
Hist. Mil.
viii. 13-20.

Though, however, Marlborough had in this manner foiled the movement of the French general, he had experienced a sensible reverse, and it had become evident that he was not in a condition to undertake offensive operations until the arrival of Eugene's army from the

^{6.}
Continued
procrastina-
tion of the
German
powers.

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1708.

Moselle raised his force nearer to an equality with the preponderating masses of the enemy, headed as these were by so able a general as Vendôme. During the retreat, he had lost nearly five hundred men by desertion ; and the near approach of the French army in such strength had both increased the clamour in Holland for an immediate peace, and augmented the hopes of the numerous party in the Flemish towns, who had become disgusted with the exactions of the Dutch, and longed for a restoration of the Spanish government as the only means of avoiding them. These circumstances, which were well known to Marlborough, made him most anxious for an opportunity of striking some decisive blow, before matters became irremediable. The usual delays, however, of the German powers, long prevented this object being attained. For about a month Marlborough was on this account retained in a state of forced inactivity, during which period he bitterly complained, “ that the slowness of the German powers was such as to threaten the worst consequences.” At length, however, the pressing representations of the English general, seconded by the earnest entreaties of Prince Eugene, overcame the tardiness of the Imperial Electors, and the army of the Moselle began its march towards Brabant. But the Prince was too far distant to bring up his troops to the theatre of active operations before decisive events had taken place ; and, fortunately for the glory of England, to Marlborough alone and to his army belongs the honour of one of the most decisive victories recorded in its annals.¹

¹ Marl. Des. iv. 49-56. Hist. Mil. viii. 21-29. Coxe. iv. 110, 115, 121.

Encouraged by his superiority of numbers, and the assurances of support he received from the malcontents in the Flemish towns, Vendôme, who was an able and enterprising general, put in execution, in the beginning

of July, a design which he had long meditated for the purpose of expelling the Allies from Brabant. This was, by a sudden irruption to make himself master of Ghent, with several of the citizens of which he had established a secret correspondence. That city commanded the course of the Scheldt and the Lys, and lay in the very centre of Marlborough's water communications; and as the fortifications of Oudenarde were in a very dilapidated state, it was reasonable to suppose that its reduction would speedily follow. The latter fortress was a stronghold of the very highest importance, as it was the connecting link for the defence of Flanders and Brabant; and when it was occupied by the Allies, they could advance towards Lille, interpose between France and Ghent, and cut off the entire communications of a hostile army with their own country. Its reduction, therefore, formed an essential part of the French general's design. The capture of these fortresses would at once break up Marlborough's communications, and sever the connecting link between Flanders and Brabant, so as to compel the English army to fall back to Antwerp and the line of the Scheldt, and thus deprive them of the whole fruits of the victory of Ramilies. Such was the able and well-conceived design of the French general, which promised the most brilliant results; and which, against a general less wary and able than Marlborough, would unquestionably have obtained them.¹

Vendôme executed the first part of this design with vigour and success. On the evening of the 4th of July he suddenly broke up from Braine-le-Leude, and marching rapidly all night, advanced towards Halle and Tubise, despatching, at the same time, parties towards such towns in that quarter as had maintained a corre-

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7.
Vendôme's
able plan to
aid a rising
in Ghent
and Bruges.

¹ Coxe, iv.
126, 127.
Hist. Mil.
viii. 23, 24.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
316, 317.

8.
He makes
himself mas-
ter of Ghent
and Bruges.

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1708.

spondence with him. One of these parties, consisting of two thousand grenadiers and two thousand horse, under M. Cherambault, by the connivance of the watch, by whom they were admitted within the gates without firing a shot, made itself master of Ghent. M. la Taille, the high bailiff of Ghent, assembled the citizens, and, producing a pardon for the defection, signed by the Elector of Bavaria, readily persuaded them to declare for France; and the small garrison, of three hundred men, was speedily shut up in the citadel. At the same time, Bruges was surrendered to another party under the Count de la Mothe; the small but important fort of Plassendael was carried by storm, and a detachment sent to recover Ghent found the gates shut by the inhabitants, who had now openly joined the enemy, and invested the Allied garrison in the citadel. Marlborough no sooner heard of this movement than he followed with his army; but he arrived in the neighbourhood of Tubise in time only to witness the passage of the enemy over the Senne, near that place. Giving orders to his troops to prepare for battle, he put himself in motion at one next morning, intending to bring the enemy to an immediate action. The activity of Vendôme, however, baffled his design. He made his men, weary as they were, march all night, and cross the Dender at several points, breaking down the bridges behind them, and took post between Alort and Oerdegun; and the Allies only arrived in time to make three hundred prisoners from the rearguard.¹

July 9.

¹ Coxe, iv. 127, 128. Hist. Mil. viii. 25, 26. Hist. de Marl. ii. 318, 319.

Scarcely had they recovered from this disappointment, when intelligence arrived of the surprise of Ghent and Bruges; while, at the same time, the ferment in Brussels, owing to the near approach of the French to

that capital, became so great, that there was every reason to apprehend a similar disaster, from the disaffection of some of its inhabitants. The most serious apprehensions also were entertained for Oudenarde, the garrison being feeble, the works dilapidated, and the place of such paramount importance, as cutting off from the Allies all communication with Merion and Courtray. Marlborough's measures at this crisis were prompt and decided. He took part himself at Asche to cover Brussels, and despatched instant orders to Lord Chandos, who commanded at Ath, to collect all the detachments he could from the garrisons in the neighbourhood, and throw himself into Oudenarde; and with such diligence were these orders executed, that that fortress was secured against a *coup-de-main* before the French outposts under M. Cherambault, on the 9th July, appeared before it. Vendôme, however, felt himself strong enough to undertake its siege in form, and he was positively ordered by Louis XIV. to commence the blockade in the mean time. He drew his army round it; the investment was completed on the evening of the 9th, and a train of heavy artillery was ordered from Tournay to commence the siege, while he himself, with the covering army, intended to take post in a strong camp at Lessines, on the river Dender.¹

Such was the chagrin experienced by Marlborough at these untoward events that he was thrown into a fever, the result of fatigue, watching, and anxiety.* He was

* "The treachery of Ghent, continual marching, and some letters I have received from England, (from the Queen and the Duchess,) have so vexed me, that I was yesterday in so great a fever that the doctor would have persuaded me to have gone to Brussels; but I thank God I am now better, and by the next post I hope to answer your letters. The States have used this country so ill that I noways doubt but all the towns in it will play us the same trick as Ghent, if they have the power."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 9, 1708; COXE, iv. 38.

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9.
Marlborough's activity secures Oudenarde against a *coup-de-main*.

¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 320, 321. Hist. Mil. viii. 29, 30. Louis XIV. au Duc de Bourgoyne, July 11, 1708. Ibid. Des. iv. 95-101.

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VI.

1708.

10.
Extreme
vexation
and serious
illness of
Marlbo-
rough.

particularly disheartened by the loss of Ghent and Bruges, as they lay in the very centre of his water communications, on which he mainly relied for getting up his provisions, artillery, and military stores. By the loss of these fortresses, the undertaking of any considerable siege during the campaign was rendered difficult, if not impossible. His physician earnestly counselled him to leave the camp, and retire to Brussels, as the only means of arresting his distemper; but nothing could induce him to abandon his post at such a crisis. He continued in his tent, accordingly, and the orders were issued by Marshal Overkirk. Eugene's army, in pursuance of the plan agreed on, broke up from the Moselle in the end of June, and advanced by rapid marches towards Brabant, to the number of thirty thousand men; but their arrival could not be relied on till the middle of July; and meanwhile Oudenarde would be exposed to the utmost danger. Marlborough was greatly relieved on the 7th by the arrival of Prince Eugene, who, finding his troops could not come up in time, had left his cavalry at Maestricht, and hastened in person, though without any followers but his private suite, to take a part in the approaching conflict. Great was the joy of Marlborough on learning the arrival of so illustrious a general: not a feeling of jealousy crossed the breast of either of these great men. His first words to Eugene were—"I am not without hopes of congratulating your Highness on a great victory; for my troops will be animated by the presence of so distinguished a commander." Eugene warmly approved the resolution he had taken of instantly attacking the enemy; for, indeed, matters had come to such a pass that it could no longer be delayed, without the most imminent danger

to the common cause. If the enemy were not speedily checked, there was reason to fear other towns in Brabant would follow the example of Ghent and Bruges: the malcontent party in Holland would become irresistible, and the Tories in England would get into power, and sacrifice the whole objects of the war. A council of war having been summoned, their united opinion prevailed over the objections of the Dutch deputies, who were less obstinate in resisting vigorous measures than usual, from having become seriously alarmed for their barrier. It was resolved to attack the enemy in their position, covering the siege of OUDENARDE.¹

CHAP.
VI.
1706.

¹ Marlbo.
Des. iv.
79-102.
Coxe, iv.
130-132.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
323.

The plan resolved on for this purpose by Marlborough and Eugene was as able as its execution was felicitous. Instead of moving direct on the covering army of Vendôme, which lay between them and Oudenarde, they resolved to throw themselves on his communications, and, by interposing between him and the French frontier, compel him to fight with his face towards Paris and his back to Antwerp. It was precisely a repetition of what Marlborough had already done in the campaign of 1705, when the results which would have arisen from such a plan were frustrated by the Dutch deputies. Everything here depended on activity and rapidity of movement, and these were not wanting. The Allies broke up at two in the morning of the 9th July, and advanced in four great columns towards Lessines and the French frontiers. So rapid and well ordered was the march that before noon the heads of the columns had reached Herfelingen, fourteen miles from Asche, whence they had started. Bridges were rapidly thrown over the Dender, at Lessines, by Cadogan, and it was crossed early on the

11.
Marlbo-
rough's
cross-march
on Ven-
dôme's
communica-
tions, July
9.

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1708.

following morning in presence of Eugene and Marlborough, whom the animation of the great events in progress had, in a manner, raised from the bed of sickness. Here the Duke halted, and the troops encamped in their order of march, with their right on the Dender and their front covered by a small stream which falls into that river. By this bold and rapid movement Vendôme's well-conceived plan was entirely disconcerted; his occupation of the strong post of Lessines had been anticipated: Marlborough had thrown himself between the French and their own frontier; he had rendered himself master of their communications; and, instead of seeking merely to cover his own fortresses, his measures threatened to compel the enemy to fall back in order to regain the connection with their own country, and to abandon the whole enterprise, which they had commenced with such prospects of success.¹

¹ Hist. de Marlbr. ii. 323, 324. Coxe, iv. 137-139. Hist. Mil. viii. 33, 34.

12.
Vendôme moves off, followed by the Allies, July 11.

Vendôme was extremely disconcerted at this able movement, and immediately ordered his troops to fall back upon Gavre, situated on the Scheldt below Oudenarde, where he had resolved to cross that river. No sooner was this design made manifest than Marlborough followed with all his forces, with the double design of raising the investment of Oudenarde, and, if possible, forcing the enemy to give battle, under the disadvantage of doing so in a retreat. Anxious to improve their advantage, the Allied generals marched with the utmost expedition, hoping to come up with the enemy when their columns and baggage were close upon the Scheldt, or at least while they were in the very act of crossing that river. Colonel Cadogan, with a strong advanced guard, was pushed forward by daybreak on the 11th,

towards the Scheldt, which he reached by eleven. Having immediately thrown bridges over it at a point between Oudenarde and Gavre, he crossed with the whole cavalry and twelve battalions of foot. This body advanced to the summit of the plateau on the left bank of the river, and formed in battle array—the infantry opposite Eynes, the cavalry extending on the left towards Schaerken. Advancing slowly on in this regular array down the course of the river, on its left bank, Cadogan was not long of coming in sight of the French advanced guard, under Biron, which was moving up from Gavre, and with which he had some sharp skirmishing, in which the enemy had the advantage, as they stopped the Allied advance, and retained possession of the village of Eynes, which lay in their road. Meanwhile Marlborough and Eugene were pressing the passage at the bridges with all imaginable activity; but the greater part of their army had not yet got across. The main body was still half a league from the Scheldt, and the huge clouds of dust which arose from the passage of the artillery and carriages in that direction, inspired Vendôme with the hope that he might cut off the advanced guard, which was over that river, before the bulk of the Allied forces could get across to their relief. With this view he halted his troops, and drew them up hastily in order of battle, pushing forward, at the same time, twelve squadrons of horse to support Biron, who was engaged with their advanced guard under Cadogan. This brought on the great and glorious action which followed, towards the due understanding of which, a description of the theatre of combat is indispensable.¹

CHAP.
VI.
1703.

¹ Coxe, iv.
130-133.
Kausler,
713. Hist.
Mil. viii.
35, 36.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
325, 326.

“At the distance of a mile north of Oudenarde is the village of Eynes. Here the ground rises into a

CHAP.
VI.

1703.

13.
Description
of the field
of battle.

species of low but spacious amphitheatre. From thence it sweeps along a small plain, till it nearly reaches the glaciis of Oudenarde, where it terminates in the village of Bevere. To the west the slope ascends to another broad hill called the Bosercauter; and at the highest point of the eminence stands a windmill, shaded by a lofty lime-tree, forming conspicuous objects from the whole adjacent country. From thence the ground gradually declines towards Mardlen; and the eye, glancing over the humid valley watered by the Norken, rests on another range of uplands, which, gently sinking, at length terminates near Asper. Within this space, two small streams, descending from the lower part of the hill of Oyeke, embrace a low tongue of land, the centre of which rises to a gentle elevation. The borders of these rivulets are crossed by frequent enclosures, surrounding the farmyards of Barwaen, Choben, and Diepenbeck. Near the source of one of these streams is a castellated mansion; at that of the other is the hamlet of Rhételhouk, embosomed in a wooded nook. These streams unite at the hamlet of Schaerken, and their united current flows in a marshy bed to the Scheldt, which it reaches near Eynes. The Norken, another river traversing the field, runs for a considerable distance parallel to the Scheldt, until, passing by Asper, it terminates in a stagnant canal, which joins the Scheldt below Gavre. Its borders, like those of the other streams, are skirted with coppice-wood thickets; behind are the enclosures surrounding the little plain. Generally speaking, this part of Flanders is even not merely of picturesque beauty and high cultivation, but great military strength; and it is hard to say whether its numerous streams, hanging banks, and umbrageous

woods, add most to its interest in the eye of a painter, or to its intricacy and defensive character in warlike operations.”*

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VI.
1708.

The apparition of the Allies excited equal surprise and perplexity in the French generals. They could not conceive it possible that a great army could march five leagues in a country much enclosed and intersected, pass a great river, and fight a battle in the same day. In truth, the vigour and celerity of Cadogan had been such as surpassed all the bounds of calculation. Irresolution and contradictory orders appeared in all their movements. At first the Duke of Burgundy advanced twenty squadrons to dispute the passage of the Scheldt with the enemy, and soon after withdrew and moved forward in the direction of Ghent. The most violent altercation prevailed at the French headquarters. “It is too late, my lord,” said Vendôme, “to continue our march towards Ghent: in half an hour we shall have the enemy on our hands; the heads of their columns are already in sight: we must either attack them instantly, or hasten our march, to keep the start we have of them.” “In halting,” answered the Duke of Burgundy, “I only yielded to your pressing solicitations.” “The great evil,” replied Vendôme, “is, that instead of halting the troops behind the Scheldt, we have moved on into an enclosed country, intersected with hedges, thick set with copses and villages, where the troops must of necessity combat separately, and to all appearance with disadvantage.”¹ The result of these altercations was, that contradictory orders were given, and the hesitations and

14.
Dispute between Burgundy and Vendôme.

¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 326, 329. Coxe, iv. 140.

* The above description of the field of Oudenarde is mainly taken from COXE, iv. 134, 135; but the author, from personal inspection of the field, can attest its accuracy.

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15.

Preliminary
movements
on both
sides, and
capture of
the French
advanced
guard.

fears of the commanders became apparent to and discouraged the whole army.

It was not thus with Eugene and Marlborough, who were not only perfectly united in council, but equally prompt and decided in their measures. As fast as the Allies got across the Scheldt, Marlborough formed them along the high grounds stretching from Bevere to Moreghem mill, with their right resting on the Scheldt. Vendôme's men extended across the plain, from the hill of Asper on the left to Warreghem on the right. A considerable body of cavalry and infantry lay in front of their position in Eynes, of which they had retained possession after repulsing Cadogan's horse. No sooner had the English general got a sufficient number of troops up than he ordered that gallant officer to advance and retake the village, which was held by Pfiffer with seven battalions. Four English battalions under Sabine attacked in front, crossing the rivulet near Eynes; while the horse, making a circuit higher up, descended on the enemy's rear, while the conflict was warmly going on in front. The consequence was, that the village was carried with great loss to the enemy: three entire battalions were surrounded and made prisoners, four others routed and dispersed, twelve standards taken, and eight squadrons were cut to pieces in striving to make their way across the steep and tangled banks of the Norken. This sharp blow convinced the French leaders that a general action was unavoidable; and though, from the vigour with which it had been struck, there remained little hope of overpowering the Allied advanced guard before the main body came up, yet they resolved, contrary to the opinion of Vendôme, who had become seriously alarmed,¹ to persist in the attack, and

¹ Kausler, 712. — Coxo, iv. 141-143. Hist. de Marl. ii. 329. Rousset, ii. 231.

risk all on the issue of a general engagement. In this brilliant affair the Electoral Prince of Hanover, afterwards George II., distinguished himself by charging in person at the head of a squadron.

It was four in the afternoon when the French commenced the action in good earnest. The forces of the contending parties were nearly equal, with a slight superiority on the part of the French: they had 85,000, Marlborough 80,000 men.* The Duke of Burgundy, who had a joint command with Vendôme, ordered General Grimaldi to lead sixteen squadrons across the Norken, apparently with the view of feeling his way preparatory to a general attack. That general set out to do so; but when, after passing that stream, and arriving on the margin of the rivulet of Diepenbeck, he saw the Prussian cavalry already formed on the other side, he fell back to the small plain near the mill of Royeghem. Vendôme, meanwhile, directed his left to advance, deeming that the most favourable side for an attack; but the Duke of Burgundy, who nominally had the supreme command, and who was jealous of Vendôme's reputation, countermanded this order, alleging that an impassable morass separated the two armies in that quarter. These contradictory orders produced indecision in the French lines, and Marlborough, divining its cause, instantly took advantage of it. Judging with reason that the real attack of the enemy would be made on his left by their right, on his own left wing, in front of the castle of Bever, he ordered up the twelve bat-

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16.

Forces on
both sides,
and com-
mencement
of the battle.

* The forces stood as follows:—

ALLIES.	MEN.	FRENCH.	MEN.
Battalions, 112	80,000	Battalions, 121	85,000
Squadrons, 130		Squadrons, 198	

—KAUSLER, 712.

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talions of foot under Cadogan from Huerne and Eynes, which they occupied, to Groenvelde and Herlehem to reinforce the left. In the mean time he lined all the woods and hedges around these posts, and between them and the Norken, with light troops. Marlborough himself, at the head of the Prussian horse, advanced by Huerne, and took post on the right flank of the little plain of Diepenbeck, where it was evident that the heat of the action would ensue. A column of twenty British battalions, with four guns, was stationed under Argyle near Schaerken, which proved of the most essential service in the ensuing struggle. Few pieces of artillery were brought up on either side, the rapidity of the movements of both having outstripped the slow pace at which those ponderous implements of destruction were then conveyed.¹

¹ Hist. Mil. viii. 35. M. d'Artaignan à Louis XIV., July 11, 1708. Ibid. viii. 336. Marlborough to Count Piper, July 15, 1708. Marl. Des. iv. 115. Coxe, iv. 144, 145.

17.
Brilliant
success of
the French
right.

Hardly were these defensive arrangements completed, when the tempest was upon them. The whole French right wing, consisting of thirty battalions, embracing the French and Swiss guards, and the flower of their army, crossed the Norken, debouched from the woods and hedges near Groenvelde, and, attacking four battalions stationed there, quickly compelled them to retreat. Advancing then in the open plain by échelon, the right in front, along the downward bed of the rivulet of Diepenbeck, they followed up their advantage with the utmost vigour. The action ran like a running fire along the course of this stream; the French constantly pressing on and outflanking the Allies, till they completely turned their left, and made themselves masters of the hamlets of Barwaen and Banlaney. Their advance entirely uncovered the Allied left. Already the cries of victory were heard in the French right, which advanced

in good order through the tangled and broken ground around those villages, with a rapid and well-sustained fire issuing from its ranks. So great was the advantage gained that the Duke of Burgundy and the French generals deemed the battle won. In truth, it was near being so, for this success exposed the Allies to imminent danger. In their rear was the Scheldt, flowing lazily, in a deep and impassable current, through marshy meadows, crossed only by a few bridges, over which retreat would be impossible in presence of a victorious enemy; and the defeat already sustained by the left exposed them to the danger of being cut off from the friendly ramparts of Oudenarde, their only resource in that direction.¹

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¹ Kausler, 714. Rousset, ii. 252. Coxe, iv. 145. M. d'Artaignan à Louis XIV., July 11, 1703. Hist. Mil. viii. 366. Hist. de Marl., ii. 333-335.

This alarming success of the French attracted the immediate attention of the vigilant English general. He instantly hastened in person to the scene of danger on the left, where the Dutch and Hanoverians were, despatching Eugene to take the command on the right, where the British troops, whose valour the Prince had often observed and praised, were posted. Marlborough then directed Count Lottum, with his twenty battalions, to extend his right to support Eugene, so that the Imperial general had now sixty battalions under his orders, while Marlborough had only twenty left in the centre. This reinforcement came up just in time, for the Prince was at first assailed by such superior numbers that he was wellnigh overwhelmed. Cadogan's men, under his orders, had been driven, after a stout resistance, out of the wooded coverts which they occupied near Herlechem, and were retiring somewhat in disorder over the plain in its front. Reinforced, however, by the twenty battalions under Lottum, Eugene again advanced

18.
Operations
of Eugene
on the right.

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in good order, and broke the first line of the enemy. General Natzmer, at the head of the Prussian cuirassiers, took advantage of their disorder, and charged headlong through the second line of the enemy's left, so as to reach the little plain near the chapel of Royeghem. But here their career was stopped by a line of the French horse-guards in reserve, while a dreadful fire of musketry streamed out of every hedgerow and copse with which the plain was environed. Never in modern war had a more severe fire been experienced; and though there were few pieces of artillery on either side, the roar of the musketry resounded to the distance of many leagues around. The effect of this dreadful fire from invisible enemies was soon seen on the Prussian cuirassiers. Half the men were speedily stretched on the plain; the remainder recoiled in disorder, and Natzmer himself with difficulty escaped, by leaping over a broad ditch, while the French household troops were thundering in pursuit.¹

¹ Coxe, iv.
146, 147.
Kausler,
717, 718.
Rousset, ii.
252, 253.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
335, 336.
M. d'Ar-
taignan à
Louis XIV.
July 12,
1708. Hist.
Mil. viii.
337.

19.
And of
Marlbo-
rough on
the left.

While Eugene was thus combating with various success on the right, Marlborough had a more arduous conflict to maintain on the left. Placing himself at the head of the Dutch and Hanoverian battalions, which were with difficulty maintaining their ground against the advancing line and increasing vehemence of the enemy, the English general led them again to the attack. But it is no easy matter to make the French recede from the enthusiasm of victory to the hesitation which precedes defeat. They opposed a most desperate resistance to this onset. The ground on which the hostile lines met was so broken that the battle in that quarter turned almost into a series of partial conflicts, and even personal encounters. Every bridge, every ditch, every wood, every hamlet, every

enclosure, was obstinately contested ; and so incessant was the roll of musketry, and so intermingled did the hostile lines become, that the field, seen from a distance, appeared an unbroken line of fire. A warmer fire, a more desperate series of combats, was never witnessed in modern warfare : it was in great part conducted hand to hand, like the battles of antiquity, of which Livy and Homer have left such graphic descriptions. The cavalry could not act from the multitude of hedges and copses which intersected the theatre of conflict ; breast to breast, knee to knee, bayonet to bayonet, they maintained the fight on both sides with the most desperate resolution.

If the resistance, however, was obstinate, the attack was no less vigorous : and at length the enthusiastic ardour of the French yielded to the steady valour of the Germans. Gradually they were driven back, literally at the bayonet's point ; and at length, recoiling at every point, they yielded all the ground they had won at the commencement of the action.¹

Banlaney and Barwaen were soon regained, but not without the most desperate resistance ; for not only did the enemy obstinately contest every field and enclosure, but in their fury they set fire to such of the houses as could no longer be maintained. Despite all these obstacles, however, the English general fairly drove them back, at the musket's point, from one enclosure to another, till they reached the hamlet of Diepenbeck, where the resistance proved so violent that he was compelled to pause. His vigilant eye, however, ere long observed that the hill of Oyeke, which flanked the enemy's extreme right, was unoccupied. Conceiving that their right might be turned by this eminence, he directed Overkirk, with the reserve cavalry and twenty Dutch and

¹ Coxe, iv. 146, 147.
Hist. de Marl. ii. 336-337.
Hist. Mil. viii. 36, 37.
Rousset, ii. 252, 253.
Kausler, 713.

20.
Decisive movement by Marlborough against the French left.

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Danish battalions, to occupy it. The veteran general executed this important, and, as it proved, decisive movement, with his wonted alacrity and spirit. The narrow defiles by which alone the enemy could be reached were speedily passed by the Danish cavalry, headed by Overkirk in person, who, despite his age and infirmities, displayed the spirit of a gallant officer of twenty-five. The infantry followed him at double-quick time; and soon the effect of this felicitous movement became apparent. The wooded dells round the castle of Beverc soon rang with musketry; the enemy, forced out of them, were driven over the shoulder of the Bosercanter; which being soon passed, the mill of Oyeke, and the plateau behind it, were immediately occupied by the Danish and Dutch battalions.¹

¹ Kausler, 715, 716.
Coxe, iv. 146, 147.
Rousset, ii. 252, 253.

21.
Vigour with which it was executed by Overkirk, who entirely turns them.

Arrived on the summit, Overkirk made his men bring up their left shoulders, so as to wheel inwards, and form a vast semicircle round the right wing of the French, which, far advanced beyond the centre, was now thrown back, and grouped into the little plain of Diepenbeck. Observing the effect of this movement, Marlborough directed Overkirk to press forward his left still farther, so as to seize the passes of Mullem and the mill of Royeghem, by which the communication between the enemy's right and centre was maintained. This order was executed with vigour and success by the Prince of Orange and General Oxenstiern. The progress of the extreme Allied left round the rear of the French right was observed by the frequent flashes of their musketry, rendered visible by the approach of night, on the heights above Mullem, to which they began to descend, driving the enemy before them with loud cheers, which re-echoed over the whole field of battle. The victory was now

gained. The Allies, in a vast semicircle, pressed on all sides on the retreating French, who were huddled together in inextricable confusion in the centre. Refluent from all quarters, enveloped on every side, the whole French right was hurled together, in wild confusion, into the plain of Diepenbeck, where seven regiments of horse, which made a noble effort to stem the flood of disaster, were all cut to pieces or taken, while the *gendarmérie à cheval*, the finest horse in the French service, suffered not less severely from the charge of the Danish cavalry.¹

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¹ Coxe, iv.
148, 149.
Rousset, ii.
253. Hist.
Mil. viii. 37.

Seeing his right wing on the verge of destruction, Vendôme made a gallant effort to rescue it. Dis-mounting from his horse, he led the infantry of his left near Mullem, to the aid of their devoted comrades. But the thick and frequent enclosures broke their array ; the soldiers were dismayed by the loud shouts of victory from their right ; and when they emerged from the enclosures, and approached the plain of Diepenbeck, the firm countenance of the British horse, drawn up on its edge, and the sturdy array of their infantry under Eugene, which advanced to meet them, rendered the effort abortive. Meanwhile darkness set in, though the battle still raged on all sides. The frequent flashes of the musketry on the heights around, intermingled with the shouts of the victors, showed but too clearly how nearly the extremity of danger was approaching to the whole French army. So completely were they enveloped that the advanced guard of the right under Eugene, and of the left under the Prince of Orange, met on the heights in the French rear, when they exchanged several volleys ; and it was only after great exertions had been made by the respective commanders that their

22.
Gallant but
ineffectual
efforts of
Vendôme to
arrest the
disorder.

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error was discovered, and a stop was put to such useless butchery. To prevent a repetition of such disasters, orders were given to the whole troops to halt where they stood; and to this precaution many owed their safety, as it was impossible in the darkness to distinguish friend from foe. But it enabled great part of the centre and left of the French to escape unobserved, which, had daylight continued for two hours longer, would have been all taken or destroyed. Their gallant right was left to its fate; while Eugene, by directing the drums of his regiments to beat the French *assemblée*, made great numbers of their left and centre prisoners. Some thousands of the right, by slipping unobserved to the westward, near the castle of Bevere, made their way in a confused body, in the interval between the Allied left and centre, towards France; but the greater part of that wing were killed or taken. Vendôme, with characteristic presence of mind, formed a rearguard of a few battalions and twenty-five squadrons, with which he covered the retreat of the centre and left; but the remainder of those parts of the army fell into total confusion, and fled headlong in wild disorder towards Ghent.¹

¹ Marlborough to Count Piper, July 16, 1708. Des. iv. 115. Duke of Berwick's Mem. ii. 12. Coxe, iv. 146-151. Hist. de Marl. ii. 338, 339. Rousset, ii. 253.

23.
Results of
the battle.

Such was the battle of Oudenarde, one of the most obstinately contested and glorious victories recorded in the British annals, and in which it is hard to say whether the palm of valour was to be yielded to the victors or the vanquished. We have the authority of Marlborough for the assertion, that, "if he had had two hours more of daylight, the French army would have been irretrievably routed, great part of it killed or taken, and the war terminated on that day."* As it was, the

* *Marlborough à M. De Thengue*, 15th July 1708.—*Desp.* iv. 111.

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effects of the blow which had been struck were prodigious, and entirely altered the character and fate of the campaign. The French lost six thousand men in killed and wounded, besides nine thousand prisoners, including seven hundred officers, and one hundred standards wrested from them in fair fight. Their total loss, including deserters, was fully twenty thousand men. The Allies were weakened by five thousand men ; for the French were superior in number, and fought well, having been defeated solely by the superior generalship of the Allied commanders ;* and their position was so strong that Marlborough confessed he never would have hazarded an attack upon it, were it not that it appeared at that juncture absolutely necessary to re-establish the affairs of the Grand Alliance, and discomfit his enemies at home, even more formidable than in the field.^{1 †}

¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 341. Coxe, iv. 152. Berwick's Mem. ii. 12. Marlborough to Godolphin, July 23, 1708, Coxe, iv. 164.

No sooner did daylight appear than forty squadrons were detached towards Ghent, in pursuit of the enemy ; while Marlborough himself, with characteristic humanity,

* *Desp.* iv. 111. Berwick himself states the prisoners at nine thousand.—“ Je trouvai à Tournay force débris de l'armée : par la revue, qui en fut faite, le nombre se montoit, tant à Tournay qu' à Lille et Ypres, à neuf mille et quelques soldats ; les ennemis nous avoient fait pareil nombre des prisonniers.” —BERWICK'S *Memoires*, ii. 12 ; MARLBOROUGH, ii. 12 ; *Marlborough to the Duchess*, July 16, 1708 ; COXE, iv. 157.

† “ I must ever acknowledge the goodness of God in the success he has been pleased to give us ; for I believe Lord Stair will tell you they were in as strong a post as is possible to be found ; but you know when I left England I was positively resolved to endeavour, by all means, a battle, thinking nothing else would make the Queen's business go on well. This reason alone made me venture the battle yesterday, otherwise I did give them too much advantage : but the good of the Queen and my country shall always be preferred by me before any personal concern ; for I am very sensible, if I had miscarried, I should have been blamed. I hope I have given such a blow to their foot that they will not be able to fight any more this year. My head aches so terribly that I must say no more.”—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 12, 1708 ; COXE, iv. 153.

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24.
Pursuit of
the enemy,
and human-
ity of Marl-
borough.

visited the field of battle, doing his utmost to assuage the sufferings and provide for the cure of the numerous wounded, alike friend and foe, who encumbered its bloody expanse. The spectacle which presented itself was afflicting in the extreme: war, divested of all its pomp and circumstance, exhibited only its sufferings and its woe. Among several thousand corpses of all nations, from Gibraltar to the Baltic, lay a prodigious number of wounded and mutilated, enveloped in carnage and surrounded by the wreck of war. The groans of the wounded, their piteous cries for water, the shrieks of the horses, maddened with pain, presented a scene of unequalled horror and anguish. By Marlborough's orders the utmost efforts were made to assuage the sufferings of the wounded, and to bestow on all, whether friend or foe, every care and relief which circumstances rendered possible. To the officers of the enemy he gave all the money from his private funds which was at his disposal. The agonies of suffering nature were thus in many cases soothed, and numbers were snatched from a lingering and painful death to acknowledge the beneficence and bless the name of their conqueror. While Marlborough was engaged in these pious cares, Eugene hastened to Brussels, where he revisited, for the first time since he had left France, his aged mother, the Countess of Soissons. He departed from her a youth exiled from his country, disappointed in his hopes, seeking his fortune at the sword's point in foreign lands. He returned to her arms a conqueror, crowned with laurels, the general of vast armies, the deliverer of kingdoms, threatening the very existence of the haughty monarch who had driven him from his dominions. He himself has told us, that "the

fortnight he spent with her was the happiest of his life"—so much do the joys springing from the natural affections exceed all which human greatness can confer. How much do the events of real life outstrip all that romance has figured, or would venture to portray !¹

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¹ Coxe, iv.
151. Mém.
de Eugène,
118.

Meanwhile Marlborough despatched Count Lottum with thirty battalions and fifty squadrons to possess himself of the lines which the enemy had constructed between Ypres and Warneton, which that officer did with vigour and success, making five hundred prisoners. This was the more fortunate, as, at the moment they were taken, the Duke of Berwick, with the French army from the Moselle, was hastening up, and had exhorted the garrisons of the forts to defend the lines to the last extremity. At the same time the corresponding Allied army, commanded by Eugene, arrived at Brussels, so that both sides were largely reinforced. Berwick's corps, which consisted of thirty-four battalions and fifty-five squadrons, was so considerable that its junction would raise Vendôme's army again to a hundred thousand men. That able general meanwhile took post in a camp which he strongly fortified, situated behind the canal of Bruges, in the vicinity of Ghent, and commanding the navigation both of the Scheldt and the Lys. He rightly judged that, as long as he was there at the head of such a force, the Allies would not venture to advance into France—though it lay entirely open to their incursions, Marlborough being between him and Paris.²

25.
Capture of
the French
lines, and
junction of
Berwick
with Ven-
dôme, and
of Eugene's
army with
Marlbo-
rough.

² Marlbo-
rough to
Godolphin,
July 16,
1708. Coxe,
iv. 153, 159.
Berwick's
Mém. ii.
108.

The event of this battle demonstrated on what just principles of strategy Marlborough's measures had been founded, and of what vital importance his cross-march,

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26.

Great results of the battle of Oudenarde, from the French having been cut off from their communications.

so as to throw himself on the enemy's communications, had proved. By having passed Vendôme, interposed between him and France, and compelled him to fight with his back to Antwerp and his face to Paris, the English general had gained the immense advantage of throwing him, in the event of defeat, into a corner of Flanders, and leaving the French frontier, and all its great fortresses, alike exposed to the incursion or open to the attacks of the enemy. It is true, Vendôme, by having obtained possession of Ghent and Bruges, had procured for himself a *point d'appui* in the enemy's territory, and a secure refuge, for a time at least, in case of disaster ; and there, accordingly, he had thrown himself with the bulk of his forces, after the disaster of Oudenarde. But by so doing, and leaving Marlborough between him and Lille, he entirely abandoned both his communications and the protection of the French frontier, and left the English general at perfect liberty to pursue any project of insult or aggression to its territory which might be deemed expedient. Nothing now could prevent the junction of Eugene's army with that of Marlborough, which, accordingly, was effected at Brussels on the 25th July ; and although the corresponding accession of Berwick's force to Vendôme might be expected, yet even this reinforcement to an army weakened by full twenty thousand men by the late battle, and grievously depressed by its overthrow, would neither compensate his losses, nor put him in a condition to frustrate the designs of the enemy. ¹

¹ Coxe, iv. 160, 163. Hist. de Marl. ii. 345, 347.

Encouraged by this singular posture of the armies, Marlborough, who had taken post at Werneck, strongly urged upon the Allied council of war the propriety of relinquishing all lesser objects, passing the whole fortified

towns on the frontier, and advancing straight towards the French capital.* This bold counsel, which savoured of the daring in design which, as much as caution and foresight in execution, characterised all Marlborough's enterprises, was precisely what Wellington and Blücher did a century after, in advancing from the same country, and, although its dangers were much greater, would have been perhaps attended with similar success. But it was rejected. Eugene and the remainder of the council considered the design too hazardous, while Vendôme with so great an army lay intrenched in their rear, and threatening their communications.† It was resolved, therefore, to commence the invasion of the territory of the Grand Monarque, by the siege of the great frontier fortress of LILLE, the strongest and most important place in French Flanders, and the possession of which would give the Allies a solid footing

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27.

Marlborough's advice to march to Paris is overruled, and it is resolved to lay siege to Lille.

* "Conscious of the panic which prevailed in France, and aware that some brilliant enterprise was requisite to prevent the Dutch from listening to separate overtures for peace, Marlborough proposed to meet at Lille, and penetrate by the northern frontier into the heart of France. An expedition fitted out in England was to co-operate on the coast. But the design of penetrating direct into France seemed too bold even to Eugene, and, of course, encountered strong opposition from a government so timid and vacillating as that of Holland."—Coxe, iv. 165.

† "From what I hear from the States, it is plain they think enough is done for peace, and I am afraid they will not willingly give their consent for the marching their army into France, which certainly, if it succeeded, would put a happy end to the war. I have acquainted Prince Eugene with the earnest desire we have for our marching into France. He thinks it impracticable till we have Lille for a *place d'armes* and magazine; and then he thinks we may make a very great inroad, but not be able to winter, though we might be helped by the fleet, unless we were masters of some fortified town. The letter I send you from M. Buys was written before they knew of the loss of Tortosa, by which you may be sure their inclinations for peace will increase. I am assured that, if this action (Oudenarde) had not happened, some proposal of peace was to have been made towards the end of August."—Marlborough to Godolphin, July 26, 1708; COXE, iv. 167.

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in the enemy's territory. This, however, was a most formidable undertaking ; for not only was the place itself, the masterpiece of Vauban, of great strength, but the citadel within its walls was still stronger, and it was garrisoned by Marshal Boufflers, one of the ablest officers in the French service, with fifteen thousand choice troops, and every requisite for a vigorous defence.¹

¹ Coxe, iv.
165. Hist.
de Marl.
ii. 350, 351.

28.
Advantages
of Vendôme's
position with
a view to
interrupting
the siege.

On the other hand, Vendôme, at the head of above a hundred thousand men, including Berwick's army, the junction of which with his own could not be prevented, lay in an impregnable camp covered by the canal of Bruges, which he had fortified with the utmost care and expedition, between Ghent and Bruges, ready to interrupt or raise the siege. His position there hampered Marlborough extremely in bringing forward the requisite equipage for so great an undertaking, by interrupting the whole water-navigation of the country, which was the only practicable mode of conveyance. Vendôme was fully aware of the advantages of this position. "We must not think," said he, "of confining ourselves in the lines of Ypres, but strengthen ourselves in a position where we can provide for the subsistence and security of the army, save Ghent and Bruges, deprive the Allies of the navigation of the Scheldt, and keep the Dutch in a continual alarm." The Duke of Burgundy acquiesced in these reasons, and Marlborough was fully aware of their force. Nevertheless it was resolved to undertake the enterprise, sanguine hopes being entertained that, rather than see so important a fortress as Lille fall, Vendôme would leave his intrenched camp, and give the Allies an opportunity of bringing him again to battle in the open field and on equal terms.²

² Marlborough to
Godolphin,
July 23,
1708. Coxe,
iv. 165, 166.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
316.

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29.

Prepara-
tions of the
Allies for
the siege.

No sooner was the undertaking resolved on than the most vigorous measures were adopted for carrying it into execution. The obstacles which presented themselves, however, were great indeed, and proved even more formidable than had been at first anticipated. Every gun, every waggon, every round of ammunition, required to be transported almost all the way by land-carriage from Holland ; and Brussels, the nearest depot for ordinary and military stores for the Allies, was situated twenty-five leagues off. Then was felt in its full force the immense loss sustained by the Allies in the interruption of the water-communications of the army, up the Scheldt and through the canals of Brabant, by the capture of Ghent and Bruges. Sixteen thousand horses were requisite to transport the train which brought these stores, partly from Maestricht, partly from Holland ; and when in a line of march, it stretched over fifteen miles. Prince Eugene, with fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons, covered the vast moving mass—Marlborough himself being ready, at a moment's notice, in his camp near Menin, to support him, if necessary. Between these two great men there existed then, as ever, the most entire cordiality.* Their measures were all taken in concord, and with such ability that, though Vendôme with eighty thousand men lay on one flank of the line of march, which extended over above seventy miles, and Berwick with thirty thousand on the other,

* "I need not tell you how much I desire the nation may be at last eased of a burdensome war, by an honourable peace ; and no one can judge better than yourself of the sincerity of my wishes to enjoy a little retirement at a place you have contributed in a great measure to make so desirable. I thank you for your good wishes to myself on this occasion. *I dare say, Prince Eugene and I shall never differ about our laurels.*"—*Marlborough to Mr Travers, July 30, 1708.*

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not a gun was taken, nor a carriage lost ; and the whole arrived in safety on the 12th of August at the camp at Helchin, whither Marlborough had gone to meet it. So marvellous were the arrangements made for the safe conduct of this important convoy, and so entire their success, that they excited the admiration of the French, and in no slight degree augmented the alarm of their generals, who had hitherto treated the idea of Lille being besieged with perfect derision. "How was it possible to believe," exclaims the French annalist Feuquières, "that it was in the power of the enemy to convey to Lille all that was necessary for the siege and supplies of the army, to conduct there all the artillery and implements essential for such an undertaking ; and that those immense burdens should be transported by land over a line of twenty-three leagues, under the eyes of an army of eighty thousand men, lying on the flank of the prodigious convoy which extended over five leagues of road ! Nevertheless all that was done without a shot being fired, or a chariot unharnessed. Posterity will scarcely believe it ; nevertheless it was the simple truth."¹

¹ Feuquières' Ann. Mil. iii. 227. Coxe, iv. 216-219. Hist. de Marl. ii. 357, 358.

30.
Vendôme makes incursions towards Ostend, and into Cadzand island.

Meanwhile both parties, with the view of distracting their opponents, and occasioning alarm in the cabinet which directed its opponent's movements, made formidable incursions into each other's territory, which by this singular combination of circumstances lay entirely open to such inroads. On the French side, Vendôme, from his impregnable camp behind the canal of Bruges, attacked on the 19th July a fort between Ghent and the Sas de Gand, which was carried after a gallant resistance by its little garrison of two hundred men, who were all cut to pieces or made prisoners. On the 28th

a French detachment took possession of Fort Albert near Ostend ; and on the same day a corps consisting of seven thousand men destroyed the lines of defence erected by the Allies between the Scheldt and Isendyck, carried the fort of Aul, and burnt the magazines of Beirvlich. Pursuing his advantages, the same officer penetrated into the island of Cadsand at the mouth of the Scheldt, which had not been visited by an enemy for a hundred years, and burnt several villages and above eighty private houses. These successes were of no great moment in themselves, but they might become so from the alarm which they spread in Holland, and the influence they might have in inducing its timorous government to make a separate peace, and withdraw altogether from the Grand Alliance.¹

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
359, 360.
Rousset, ii.
255. Hist.
Mil. viii.
42, 43.

These slight advantages, however, gained in the rear of the French army, were more than counterbalanced by the corresponding incursions made at the same time by Marlborough's light troops into the French territory. He despatched Count Tilly with twelve battalions, fifty squadrons, and a thousand grenadiers, into Artois to levy contributions. He met eight hundred horsemen near Jens, whom he attacked and speedily defeated. The fugitives fled to Jens, where there were fourteen hundred infantry ; but they, deeming themselves unable to encounter forces so considerable, abandoned that post and withdrew into the interior. The alarm spread far and wide. The whole inhabitants of the towns and villages on the frontier, seized with a universal panic, were to be seen crowding along the roads with their cattle and most precious effects in a state of the utmost consternation. Count Tilly regained the camp at Helchin on the 3d August, having been ten days engaged in his expedition,

31.
Which are
avenged by
Marlboro-
rough's in-
cursions
into Artois.

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
355, 356.
Hist. Mil.
viii. 47, 48.

during which he had spread terror far and near, and wounded Louis XIV. in the most sensitive part, by showing his subjects that the territory of the Great Nation was not invulnerable, and that its inhabitants might be made to feel in their own persons a portion of the miseries they had so long inflicted on their neighbours.¹

32.
Boufflers
takes the
command at
Lille. Pre-
parations for
its defence.

Meanwhile the most vigorous measures were adopted by the French for the defence of Lille, now evidently menaced with a siege. Marshal Boufflers, the governor of West Flanders, who had solicited and obtained the post of honour, threw himself into the fortress on the 29th July with some reinforcements, which raised the garrison, of sixteen battalions of infantry, three regiments of cavalry, and eight hundred invalids, to fifteen thousand combatants. He immediately set about the most vigorous measures of defence, and communicated his own energy not only to the garrison, but to the inhabitants of the place. This celebrated place, constructed by Vauban, upon which that great man had exhausted all his genius, and Louis XIV. a large part of his treasures, was in the best possible state for sustaining a siege, and amply provided with every requisite for a protracted resistance. The plan of defence had been formed by Vauban the year previous, before his death, and its execution intrusted to his nephew, M. Antoine de Vauban, engineer-in-chief, the inheritor at once of his name and his glory. The Marquis de Surville, the Marquis de Ferzelière, and M. Lalande, were liberated from the Bastile, at their own request, to share in the dangers of the defence. Marshal Boufflers, by the vigour of his measures, soon showed how worthy he was of his command.² Palisades, fascines, and gabions were made with the utmost rapidity, mines

² Hist. Mil.
viii. 48, 49.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
363.

run under the covered-way, the works strengthened in the few places where they appeared to require support, and shelter provided in all the corners of the covered-way which were in part exposed to the enemy's fire.

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The great celebrity of Lille as the chief frontier town of France, and the masterpiece of the greatest engineer who had appeared in Europe, as well as the fame of the generals who were intrusted with its attack and defence, attracted the most illustrious princes and warriors of Europe to the scene of action. King Augustus, the dethroned sovereign of Poland, accompanied by the Landgrave of Hesse, arrived on the 19th July at Marlborough's headquarters. The former was here joined by his natural son, afterwards so celebrated as Marshal Saxe, then a boy of twelve years of age, who set out from Dresden secretly on foot, and joined the army alone, notwithstanding all the vigilance of his guardians. Here also Munich and Schwerin, afterwards so celebrated under Frederick in the Seven Years' War, made their first essay in a species of warfare of all others the most exciting and dangerous; and here the Elector of Hanover repaired to add to the laurels already earned by him on the field of Oudenarde, and witness the military prowess of the nation over which he was one day destined to reign.¹

33.
Great course of illustrious characters on both sides to witness the siege.

¹ Coxe, iv. 216. Hist. de Marl. ii. 371.

Never since the siege of Troy had such a body of chiefs and heroes been collected round the walls of a beleaguered city; and Marlborough wielded a power greater than ever had been at the command of the King of Men. It was no wonder that such an assemblage had met together, to witness the deeds of arms on either side; for the great fame of the Allied commanders had drawn the whole disposable force of France and Spain

34.
Greatness of the enterprise.

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to one point ; and the might of Southern was to be tested against that of Northern Europe around the walls of a single city, under the command of the most renowned leaders on either side which Europe had yet beheld. On the part of the Allies, the army of the Lower Rhine, united to that of Flanders, was under the orders of Marlborough and Eugene, commanders second to none in the annals of military glory, and they were assembled to besiege Lille, the great frontier fortress and chief bulwark of France. On that of France and Spain, the fortress was garrisoned by a body forming in itself an army, under the orders of the veteran hero, Marshal Boufflers ; the plan of defence, laid down by Vauban, was intrusted to the able direction of his nephew ; and two great armies, under Vendôme and Berwick, the best generals of France, mustering between them a hundred and ten thousand combatants, lay on either side to interrupt the siege.¹

¹ Hist. Mil. viii. 66, 67. Coxe, iv. 216, 217. Hist. de Marl. ii. 370, 371.

35.
Measures of
Vendôme
and Ber-
wick to in-
terrupt the
convoy, and
prevent the
siege.

So skilfully were the measures of Marlborough and Eugene taken, that, when the convoy first set out from Brussels, the French generals were at a loss whether it was Lille or Mons which was threatened. They could not be brought to believe that a measure so audacious as the siege of the former fortress was seriously in contemplation. Berwick, who lay encamped, with thirty-four battalions and sixty-three squadrons, around Douai, advanced with his whole army to Mortagne, while eighteen thousand men, detached from the main army, between Ghent and Bruges, were pushed forward to Molle, directly on the flank of the line of march of the huge convoy, to interrupt its progress. But so admirably were the measures of the Allied commanders taken that the French generals did not venture to give it

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any molestation. The convoy set out, consisting of five thousand carriages, from Brussels on the morning of the 6th August ; and so prodigious was its extent, that, when the head of the train halted at Soignies for the night, the rear had not yet left Brussels, thirteen miles off. From thence it proceeded to Ath, still on the road to Mons, where it arrived in safety, under the protection of Eugene, who, with twenty-five battalions and thirty squadrons, kept constantly on its flank. To support him, Marlborough detached the Prince of Würtemberg, with thirty squadrons, to Oudenarde, with orders to act under Eugene ; and at the same time sent General Wood, with thirty squadrons, to keep in check the troops at Ghent, and the Prince of Orange, with thirty-one battalions, to Marquette, on the Lower Dyle, to restrain the garrison of Lille ; while he himself, with the main body, repaired to the vicinity of Helchin, where the artillery had already arrived. The convoy reached the camp around Lille, in perfect safety, on the 13th August, to the infinite joy of the whole army ; and on the day following the place was invested. The French could scarcely believe their own eyes when they beheld this audacious enterprise crowned with entire success. The sagacious mind of Berwick had early penetrated Marlborough's design, and he had proposed to Vendôme, as the only means of preventing it, to unite their armies, and interpose in a body between Brussels and Lille ; but the latter would not agree to it, conceiving it might bring on a general action, and that the siege of Lille was too dangerous an enterprise to be ever attempted by such experienced commanders.¹ *

¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 357, 358. Coxe, iv. 219, 220. Hist. Mil. viii. 66, 67.

* " Il paraîtra, sans doute, surprenant que les ennemis, après avoir tiré du fond de la Hollande et rassemblé à Bruxelles l'immense quantité d'artillerie

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36.

Commence-
ment of the
siege, and
position of
the cover-
ing army,
August 13.

Prince Eugene was intrusted with the conduct of the siege, while Marlborough commanded the covering army. The Prince commenced the investment of the place on the 13th August, while Marlborough remained at Helchin, taking measures for the protection of the convoys, which were incessantly coming up from Brussels. At length the whole (eighty-one) arrived in safety in the camp before Lille, amounting to one hundred and twenty heavy guns, forty mortars, twenty howitzers, and four hundred ammunition waggons. Eugene's army for the siege consisted of fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons, in all about forty thousand men. Marlborough's covering force was sixty-nine battalions and one hundred and forty squadrons, numbering nearly sixty thousand men. The Duke's position at Helchin was so well chosen that not only did it effectually cover the siege, and facilitate the arrival of convoys from Ath, Brussels, and Oudenarde, but it prevented the junction of Berwick, who lay around Douai, with Vendôme, who was still in his intrenched camp between Ghent and Bruges.¹

To facilitate the operations of the besiegers, six bridges were thrown over the Scheldt, and a little army of pioneers, ten thousand strong, was collected to form the lines of

¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 366, 367. Coxe, iv. 220, 221. Rousset, ii. 225.

et de munitions, nécessaire pour un siège aussi important, soient parvenus à faire arriver jusqu'à Menin, sans le secours des rivières dont nous tenions les passages, et sans avoir rencontré aucun obstacle, quoique leur convoi, composé de cinq mille voitures, eut à passer entre nos deux armées, et eut plusieurs rivières à traverser. Il n'étoit pas moins étonnant que les ennemis, quoiqu'avec des armées formidables, ne pouvant se flatter d'être supérieurs aux forces que nous pouvions rassembler, osassent entreprendre un siège aussi important que celui de Lille, la plus forte place du Pays Bas, bien fournie des troupes et de munitions, et qui pouvait être secourue par deux armées composées de l'élite des troupes de France."—General PELET, *Histoire Militaire de la Guerre de la Succession*, viii. 67.

circumvallation and contravallation for attack within and defence without. Never since the memorable camp traced out and fortified by Cæsar, round the walls of Alesia, had works on so gigantic a scale been constructed. They were fifteen feet wide and nine deep, and extended over a circuit of nine miles. The park of artillery was placed with its right at the bridge of Marquette, and its left at la Marque. On the 18th August, every battalion received orders to furnish a thousand fascines and gabions for the use of the engineers, and on the day following the engineers examined the ground between Lille and Warneck to determine the position of the batteries and approaches. Meanwhile the besieged kept up a heavy fire with their great guns on the nearest posts of the besiegers, in the course of which a four-and-twenty pound ball carried off the head of the valet of the Prince of Orange, as he was dressing his master in a room of the village of Lambereost. Boufflers' men were still encamped on the glacis of the fortress, to extend the range of which he cut down the whole beautiful avenues on the esplanade; and he even pushed his advanced posts so as to annoy the advanced posts of the besiegers. Of the fifty battalions employed in the siege, ten were directed to be constantly in the trenches; and, for their guidance, a set of regulations was drawn up by Marlborough and Eugene, which are justly considered as a model on the subject, and which the military reader, who may one day be charged with similar duties, would do well to study.^{1*}

Impatient to commence operations, Eugene opened the trenches on the evening of the 23d August, although the lines of circumvallation were not yet entirely finished. Two points of attack were selected, one on the north,

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37.

Commence-
ment of the
siege, and
fortifying of
the camp,
July 14.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
369-372.
Coxe, iv.
222, 223.
Rousset, ii.
256-258.

* Appendix, No. I.

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38.

Commence-
ment of the
siege, and
first opera-
tions, Aug.
23.

near the gate of St Andrew ; the other on the left, near the gate of the Madeleine, on the opposite side of the Dyle, which flows through the town. At daybreak on the morning of the 24th, the cannonade commenced. Prince Eugene with his own hand fired the first gun on the right, the Prince of Orange on the left. Animated by such example, the works proceeded with great rapidity. The second parallel, begun on the night of the 24th, being soon finished, a tremendous fire was opened on the morning of the 25th, from forty-four twenty-four pounders, which soon seriously injured the nearest works of the place, around the Chapel of the Madeleine, near the gate of the same name. The chapel was carried in the night by assault, though with a loss of two hundred men to the assailants. The fire on both sides now became terrible. The fête of St Louis was celebrated in Lille by an incessant discharge of cannon and bombs, which was continued through the night, and illuminated the whole heavens ; and the firmament was streaked by the continual passage of burning projectiles which crossed each other in the air, and carried death or conflagration wherever they fell. During this awful scene, four hundred French silently issued from the works, in the dark, and suddenly assaulted the Chapel of the Madeleine, which was only garrisoned by two hundred Dutch, and carried it after an obstinate resistance. So expeditious were the assailants that the post was carried, the works levelled, and the enemy withdrawn, before the Prince of Orange, with reinforcements, arrived at the menaced point.¹

¹ Rousset, ii. 258, 259.
Hist. de Marl. ii. 379-381.
Coxe, iv. 225, 226.

Vendôme was now seriously alarmed for the issue of an enterprise which, in the outset, he had treated with perfect ridicule. He accordingly sent orders to Berwick

to join him, in order, with their united force, to advance and raise the siege. To prevent the junction of their two armies, Marlborough crossed the Scheldt at Pottes, and threw himself upon the line of communication which united them. But Vendôme and Berwick, being determined to effect a junction, marched by circuitous routes towards one another. Vendôme, setting out from Bruges, crossed the Scheldt at Ninove, whilst Berwick advanced from Mons through Herine. They united on the 30th, on the plain between Grammont and Lessines, and on the 2d September advanced towards Lille by Orchies and the opening between the Marque and the Dyle, with one hundred and forty battalions and two hundred and fifty squadrons, mustering one hundred and ten thousand combatants, besides twenty thousand left, under Count de la Motte, to cover Ghent and Bruges. But Marlborough had no fears for the result, and ardently longed for a general action, which he hoped would one way or other conclude the war. "If we have a second action," says he, "and God blesses our just cause, this, in all likelihood, will be our last campaign; for I think they would not venture a battle, but are resolved to submit to any condition if the success be on our side: and if they get the better, they will think themselves masters; so that, if there should be an action, it is like to be the last this war. If God continues on our side, we have nothing to fear, our troops being good, though not so numerous as theirs. I dare say, before half the troops have fought, success will declare, I trust in God, on our side; and then I may have *what I earnestly wish for—quiet.*"¹

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39.
Advance
and junction
of Vendôme
and Berwick to
raise the
siege,
Sept. 2.

¹ Marlbo-
rough to
Godolphin,
August 30,
1703. Coxe,
iv. 241-260,
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
396-397.

No sooner was Marlborough informed of the junction of Vendôme and Berwick than, anticipating the direction

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40.
Marlbo-
rough ar-
rests Ven-
dôme and
Berwick
when trying
to raise the
siege.

they would follow, and the point at which they would endeavour to penetrate through to raise the siege, he repassed the Scheldt, marched parallel to the enemy, and arrived on the 4th September at a position previously selected, having his right at Noyelles, near the Dyle, and his left at Peronne, on the Marque. So correctly had he divined the designs of the able generals to whom he was opposed, that, within two hours after he had taken up his ground, the united French army appeared in his front. They were in great strength. Modern Europe had never seen so imposing an army, for a hundred and ten thousand men, preceded by two hundred pieces of cannon, advanced to raise the siege in the finest order. Marlborough had not seventy thousand to resist the attack. Notwithstanding their great superiority of forces, the enemy, however, did not venture to attack, and the two armies remained watching each other for the next fortnight, without any movement being attempted on either side.¹

¹ Marl.
Des. iv.
241-260.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
334-337.
Coxe, iv.
227, 228.

41.
Division of
the com-
mand and
dread of re-
sponsibility
in the
French
command-
ers occa-
sioned their
failure.

The secret cause of this inactivity, when so great an issue as the fate of Lille was at stake, is to be found, not in the strength merely of the position taken by Marlborough to cover the siege, or the halo of glory with which he was surrounded, but in the divided command of the French army, and the dread of responsibility with which its generals were both penetrated, from the cautious nature of the orders received from the cabinet of Versailles. Had either Vendôme or Berwick been separately and exclusively vested with the command, it is probable they would have ventured a battle, and not permitted the Allies to take Lille in presence of a hundred and ten thousand men, without firing a shot for its relief. But the two commanders were jealous of each

other, and severally thwarted what the other proposed, for fear of seeming to have lost the lead. The son of James II., a marshal of France, and the conqueror of Almanza, was unwilling to obey the grandson of Henry IV., which Vendôme was; while the latter, esteeming his superiority sufficiently established, was hurt by an injunction which he deemed unnecessary, as implying a doubt of his supremacy, of Louis XIV. to Berwick to obey his orders. This jealousy between the chiefs was attended with the very worst effects upon the operations of their united armies, and afforded a striking contrast to the perfect unanimity which prevailed between Eugene and Marlborough. As soon as they arrived in front of Marlborough's position, Vendôme, who had allowed all the convoys to pass, now proposed that an immediate attack should be made on the covering army; but to this Berwick objected, alleging with reason that the plain between them and Marlborough was so intersected by hedges, that they could not get the columns through them till the pioneers had cut the requisite passages. In this dilemma, recourse was had to Versailles for orders, and Louis sent back directions that the attack should be made, and despatched the minister at war, M. Chamillard, to the spot to explain his views. He arrived accordingly on the 9th, and the French army, one hundred and ten thousand strong, was brought up to within a quarter of a league of the Allied position. Every one in both armies fully expected the greatest battle which modern Europe had yet seen, on the morrow.¹

¹ Berwick's
Mem., (ed.
Petitot,)
126. Hist.
de Marib.
ii. 339, 390.
Hist. Mil.
viii. 90-97.

Nevertheless it came to nothing: there was no action. The French retired without firing a shot; and this memorable instance adds another to the numerous examples in which boldness prevails over irreso-

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42.
Marlbo-
rough in-
trenches his
position,
which Ven-
dôme de-
clines to
attack.

lution—a single over a divided responsibility. The interval which the French generals consumed in corresponding with Versailles, and opening up the approaches, was sedulously employed by Marlborough in strengthening his position. A considerable part of the besieging force, yet without stripping any of the trenches, was detached by Eugene on the 4th, which brought twenty-six battalions and seventy-two squadrons to join Marlborough—making their united force above eighty-five thousand men—and with these battle was offered by the Allies, who remained all day on the 5th in order of fighting in the open field. “I have always encamped in the open field,” said Marlborough; “it does not become a victorious army to act differently.” But as so large a detachment from the besieging force seriously impeded the progress of the siege, and the French remained cautiously within their camp, he began on the 6th to throw up intrenchments; and they made such rapid progress that, on the evening of the same day, he was enabled to send back Eugene’s foot, and the following night all his horse, with two thousand of his own infantry, to resume the labours of the siege. His intrenchments, by the night of the 8th, were quite complete. They extended from Noyelles on the right to Fretin on the left, on a marsh which adjoins the Marque. The front, which was a league in length, consisted of field redoubts faced by a ditch twelve feet wide and six deep, with an earthen parapet four feet high; and in the centre, the village of Entiers was strongly occupied as a sort of advanced work. Behind this formidable bulwark the army was drawn up in two lines, supported by cavalry, with the cannon on the works in front. Such was its strength, and so admirably had the position been chosen to cover the siege, that although the orders of the

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King of France were quite positive to hazard a battle rather than allow Lille to fall, yet when Chamillard, accompanied by Vendôme and Berwick, and the other generals, reconnoitred the position, it was their unanimous opinion that it was impregnable, and that it was better to let Lille be taken than run the hazard of an attack. A despatch to this effect accordingly was sent off on the 10th to Versailles, requesting permission to retire; and the only hostilities which took place was a cannonade of the works around Entiers — the most exposed part of the line — which did not even damage the earthen parapet.¹ *

¹ Berwick's
Mem. 126.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
304-395.
Hist. Mil.
viii. 94, 98.

The resolution to decline attacking the Allied position being once taken, the best course would have been to have retired immediately, and taken advantage of their united strength to intercept, at least, any further convoys that might be coming up to the besiegers' camp; but here, again, the division of command and want of a supreme head marred the operations of the French. The King's orders being quite precise to risk a battle, M. Chamillard did not feel himself at liberty to withdraw the army till the return of the courier from Versailles

43.
The French
at length
retire to-
wards Oudenarde,
August 15.

* "Les ennemis nous ont abandonné tous les defiles, pour venir sur eux: s'ils y étaient postés, il n'aurait pas été possible de les y forcer. Ils ont un village au centre, qu'ils ont accommodé, et travaillent depuis hier à retrancher les endroits où l'on pourrait le plus facilement aborder leur camp. Je me erois obligé à vous parler franchement, n'ayant d'autre objet que le service du Roi. Quand nos troupes seraient aussi vigoureuses que je les ai vues l'autre guerre, il ne serait pas praticable d'attaquer un ennemi aussi fort du moins que nous, posté, retranché, et dont les flancs sont couverts, et qu'on ne peut déporter; mais avec une infanterie déjà rebutée et des bataillons peu nombreux, on courrait risque non seulement d'être repoussé, mais d'être même ensuite culbuté totalement. Il est triste de voir prendre Lille; mais il est encore plus triste de perdre l'unique armée qui nous reste, ou qui puisse arrêter l'ennemi après la perte de Lille. S'il y avait apparence à réussir, on pourrait hazarder; mais je vous avoue que je ne puis augurer rien de bon, si l'on se détermine à attaquer les ennemis où ils sont."—*Maréchal Berwick à M. de Chamillard*, 6th Sept., 1708; *Hist. Mil.* viii. 90, 91.

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gave liberty to do so. Meanwhile two important convoys from Brussels were approaching the besiegers' camp, and it was proposed to attack them; but Chamillard declined to give his consent, alleging as a reason, "that the King wished they should think of nothing but a battle." We have the authority of Berwick for the assertion, that, if these convoys had been intercepted, the siege would have failed.* At length the courier from Versailles having arrived on the 14th with permission to retire, the army broke up on the 15th in four great columns, and moved in the direction of Oudenarde, apparently with the design of preventing the passage of any further convoys for the use of the besiegers; and they gave out they would take that fortress before the Allies took Lille.¹

¹ Berwick's Mem. 126, 127. Marlborough to Godolphin, Sept. 17, 1708. Coxe, iv. 234. Hist. Mil. viii. 97, 98.

44.
Marlborough is prevented from fighting, and follows the enemy, Sept. 19.

Seeing that the French generals would not attack them, Marlborough and Eugene were clear to become the assailants in their turn, and warmly pressed an immediate attack on the French camp. They urged with truth that their position was extremely bad, having their flanks uncovered, and not depth of ground sufficient to throw up intrenchments. Berwick has recorded his opinion, that, if this design had been carried into effect, they would have been utterly routed, and probably the war ended on that day.† But here, as usual, the Dutch deputies interposed, alleging that, as Lille

* "Il étoit indubitable que sans de nouveaux secours, les ennemis manqueraient de tout que de pouvoir se rendre maîtres de Lille. Pendant notre séjour a Pont-à-Marcy, deux convois venus de Bruxelles passèrent tranquillement, quoique nous fussions informés de leur départ: et parcequ'on nous disait qu'il n'étoit pas question de l'empêcher, et que le Roi ne vouloit pas que l'on songeat à autre chose qu'à combattre les ennemis."—*Mémoires de Berwick*, 126, 127—edit. Petitot.

† "Le Duc de Marlborough et le Prince Eugène, voyant la mauvaise position de notre armée, voulaient à toute force pendant la nuit abattre

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would now evidently fall without a battle, it was inexpedient to risk one. With the utmost reluctance, therefore, Marlborough was obliged to allow the French to retire unmolested, and the opportunity of terminating the war at a single blow to pass. On this occasion Eugene again said, "If Cæsar or Alexander had had the Dutch deputies by their side, their conquests would have been less rapid." Accordingly, when the French retired on the 15th in four columns to Bac-à-Bern, and thence on the day following across the Scheldt, and took a position from Pottes to Aubert La Trinité, Marlborough contented himself with following them on the 19th, and, occupying a new position, with the left at Leers, and the right at Treffry, still barring all access to Lille.¹

¹ Coxe, iv. 232, 233. Hist. de Marl. ii. 398. Mem. of Berwick, 127.

Although, however, the advantage gained by the Allied generals, by this retreat of the French army, was immense, Marlborough was under great disquietude at the progress of the siege. The position chosen by the French generals beyond the Scheldt at once threatened Brussels, Oudenarde, and Menin, and effectually interrupted all communication of the Allies with those towns in which their principal magazines and reserve stores were placed. Vendôme had dispersed his army so skillfully that the whole could be concentrated in six hours, so that all idea of reopening the communication with the supplies in the rear, except by raising the siege and

45.
Increasing danger of Marlborough's position.

leurs retranchements pour nous attaquer: mais par bonheur *les députés des Etats-Généraux n'y voulurent jamais consentir*, alléguant que puisqu'ils se parvient prendre Lille sans combattre, il ne fallait mettre l'affaire au hasard, surtout se trouvant si éloignées de chez eux, que la retraite, en cas de malheur, seroit très difficile. Je suis persuadé que si ce projet eut exécuté, *nous aurions été battus à platte couture*, d'autant que nos flanes étoient découverts, et que nous n'avions pas assez de fond et de terrain pour nous pouvoir remuer."—*Mémoires de Berwick*, 127.

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fighting a battle with the whole army, was out of the question. So far advanced were the Allies into the enemy's territory, that one chaussée alone leading from the gates of Lille—viz., that to Menin—was in their hands; and Vendôme's position rendered the passage of stores along it impracticable. The progress of the siege, though it had never been interrupted by the near approach of the enemy, had been extremely slow, partly owing to the strength of the place, and partly to the skill and determined resistance of the enemy. Already the time consumed in it, without any great progress having been made, had been triple what the engineers had demanded for its entire reduction; Marlborough, therefore, had become very uneasy, and his private letters to the Duchess at this period betray an anxiety very unusual with one of his unruffled disposition.^{1*}

¹ Coxe, iv.
230-236.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
398, Rous-
set, ii. 259.

46.

Assault on
the 6th
September,
which car-
ries part of
the covered-
way.

If the progress of the siege, however, had been slow, it was not from want of the most vigorous efforts on the part of the besiegers. Since the second parallel had been completed, on the 27th of August, the place had been incessantly battered by the fire of one hundred and twenty cannon and eighty mortars of different calibres. By the evening of the 5th, two huge breaches yawned in the sides of the bastion in the outwork which was attacked, and preparations were made for an assault. Fourteen thousand men, including two thousand despatched from the covering army under Marlborough,

* "The siege goes on so very slowly that I am in perpetual fears that it may continue so long, and consequently consume so much stores, that we may not have wherewithal to finish, which will be very cruel. These are my fears, but I desire you will let nobody know them. I long extremely to have this campaign well ended, for of all the campaigns I have made, it has been the most painful; but I am in the galley, and must row as long as this war lasts."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, Sept. 17, 1708; COXE, iv. 236-237.

were employed on this perilous enterprise. The plan of the French was to let the assailants with little resistance into the covered-way, and then mow them down with grape-shot from the rampart. When the troops were defiling out of the trenches, a tremendous fire was kept up by the breaching batteries ; but when the rush began, it suddenly ceased, and they got without much difficulty into the covered-way, which they found stript of defenders. No sooner, however, was it filled with the besiegers, than a fire was suddenly opened upon them from the rampart, which in a few minutes struck down eight hundred of their number ; and in the midst of this scene of horror two mines were sprung, which blew the living, dead, and wounded alike into the air. At most points the assailants were driven out of the covered-way ; but in two places—viz., the covered-way of the tenaillon and of the hornwork—they succeeded in maintaining themselves, and on the day following got under cover. By this success the besiegers were established at two points directly opposite the rampart—an advantage dearly purchased by the loss of two thousand killed, and an equal number wounded.¹

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
404-408.
Coxe, iv.
237, 238.
Rousset, ii.
259, 260.

Marlborough was extremely disconcerted by the untoward issue and divided success of this assault, the more so as the siege stores were again failing, and the position of the enemy holding all the issues but one in which the roads from Lille terminated, rendered it apparently impossible to procure any additional supplies. Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, Douai, Tournai, which were all in the hands of the enemy, shut it in on all sides ; Menin alone was in the possession of the Allies. Eugene in his intrenched camp, surrounded by his lines of circumvallation, more nearly resembled a besieged than a besieging

47.
Increasing
difficulties
of the siege.

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force. The covering force under Marlborough was menaced by the whole force of France. His anxiety at this period, accordingly, was extreme, and clearly appears in his private correspondence.* A sally vigorously commenced, and at first successful, put the French in possession on the 10th of one of the tenaillons which had been won in the assault; but it was retaken on the day following. For some days after that, the departure of Eugene with a large detachment, to reinforce the covering army, retarded the progress of the siege; but the enemy having retired, it was resumed with fresh vigour; and Marlborough having in person visited the trenches, the utmost efforts were made to fill up the ditch, and the sap was pushed to the edge of the counter-scarp. At length a sort of bridge of fascines, broad enough for a battalion to advance in line, having been made, a fresh assault was prepared for the 20th. To lead it, Marlborough detached five thousand English from the covering army—"the *elite*," says the French annalist of the siege, "the bravest of the brave—men whose courage only increased with every peril which they encountered."¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
409-415.
Coxe, iv.
238, 239.
Rousset, ii.
260, 261.

48.
Second ter-
rible as-
sault, which
partially
succeeds,
Sept. 20.

This terrible assault began at half-past six on the evening of the 20th September, when it was just becoming dark. It extended over about a third of the external works of the place, and was led by the British troops. "Never," says the French annalist, "did the French and the English contend in a more resolute and glorious manner." The besieged in the outworks assaulted

* "It is impossible for me to express the uneasiness I suffer for the ill-conduct of the engineers at this siege, where I think everything goes wrong. It would be a cruel thing if, after what obliged the enemy to quit all thoughts of relieving the place by force, which they have done by repassing the Scheldt, we should fail of taking it by the ignorance of our engineers and the want of

were powerfully supported by the fire from the rampart, from the whole edge of which there streamed forth an incessant fire of grape and musketry, which told with fatal effect on the dense masses of the assailants, which were clearly visible from the bright light of the discharges. Three times the troops recoiled from the dreadful carnage, and three times, resolute not to be outdone, they returned to the assault. On the fourth occasion, Eugene, almost desperate of success, himself led them on. "Recollect," said he, "Hochstedt, Ramilies, and Oudenarde." Hardly were the words spoken, when he was struck on the forehead by a ball, which grazed him above the left eye, as he was advancing between the Prince of Orange and the Prince of Hesse. His hat had just before been struck off by a grape-shot. "That was a fortunate stroke," said the hero. The roar of the artillery and incessant clang of the musketry exceeded the loudest thunder, and the streams of fire which issued from the works resembled the most vehement irruption of Vesuvius. At length, after a terrible struggle of two hours' duration, the Allies succeeded in establishing themselves on the right, in the angle of the left demi-bastion of the tenaillon, and on the *place d'armes* on the covered-way opposite the great breach. This advantage was very important, but it was purchased at a most severe loss. The Allies had five thousand killed and wounded, among whom were three thousand of the English division; a clear proof upon whom the weight of the conflict had fallen, and to whom its glory belongs.¹

¹ Hist. de Marlborough, ii. 411-417. Coxe, iv. 241, 242. Rousset, ii. 262, 263.

stores; for we have already found very near as much as ever demanded for taking the town and citadel, and as yet we are not entire masters of the counterescarp, so that to you I may own my despair of ending this campaign as in reason we might have expected."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, Sept. 20, 1703; COXE, iv. 238.

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49.
Eugene's
wound
throws the
siege on
Marlbo-
rough, who
delivers a
fresh as-
sault.
Sept. 23.

Great as was this loss, it yet scarcely equalled the mischief done by the wound of Eugene. This grievous casualty not only gave the utmost distress to Marlborough, but seriously augmented his labours, for it threw on him the entire conduct of the siege, at the same time with the command of the covering army. Every morning at break of day he was on horseback reconnoitring Vendôme's army, and if all was quiet in front, he rode to the lines and directed the siege in person, when he again returned to the camp of the covering army. By thus in a manner doubling himself, this great man succeeded in preventing any serious inconvenience being experienced even from so great a catastrophe as Eugene's wound. By his orders a fresh assault was prepared for the night of the 23d in two columns, each of which was headed by five hundred English troops, with whose valour he was well acquainted. The assaulting columns, about five thousand strong, moved at half-past seven; and though they were three times repulsed, they succeeded at length in establishing themselves in another tenailon on the left. Above a thousand men were killed and wounded in that affair, great part of whom were lost by the explosion of a mine which was sprung under the tenailon. They kept their ground, however, and on the following days were busy in improving their lodgment, and labouring at mines to run under the rampart.¹*

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
418, 419.
Coxe, iv.
242, 243.
Des. iv.
269-271.

* "Since my last Prince Eugene has been wounded, though I thank God his hurt is not dangerous, and I hope to-morrow or next day he may be abroad. Ever since Friday that he was wounded, I have been obliged to be every day at the siege, which, with the vexation of its going so ill, has almost made me dead. We made a third attack last night, but are not yet masters of the whole counterscarp; but that which is yet worse, those who have the charge of the stores have declared to the deputies that the opiniatetry of the siege is such that they have not stores sufficient to take the cover."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, September 24, 1708; COXE, iv. 243.

Every point that had yet been gained in the siege had been won at the point of the bayonet ; and the vigour of the defence, after a month of open trenches, seemed to be nowise abated. Meanwhile the French generals, aware how much the fortress was straitened, and that its ammunition, from the extraordinary duration and severity of the fire, was beginning to fail, resorted to a very singular stratagem to convey powder into the town. Two thousand five hundred horsemen, well mounted, set out from Douai on the night of the 28th, under the command of the Chevalier de Luxembourg, afterwards Prince of Tingry and Marshal of France, each having sixty pounds of powder and three fusils taken to pieces in his valise. Thus equipped, they arrived at half-past nine at night, on the 28th of September, at one of the gates of the lines of circumvallation. The sentinel on duty immediately called out "*Qui Vive ?*" The leader of the party, who spoke Dutch well, immediately answered in that language, "Open quickly ; I am bringing powder to the besiegers, and I am pursued by a detachment of the French army." At these words the gate was opened, and the party began to pass through in the dark. Eighteen hundred had already passed without exciting suspicions, when one of the officers, seeing his men keeping too open order, gave the word *close-up* ("serre, serre.") On hearing this in the French tongue, the captain of the guard suspected something, and ordered the party to halt, and on their refusal to do so he directed the guard to fire. The discharge caused three of the powder-bags to take fire, and the explosion spreading from one to another, sixty men and horses perished miserably.¹ The remainder of the troops fled in disorder, but those who had passed galloped as fast as possible towards the gates of the

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50.

Efforts on
the part of
the besieged
to obtain
supplies of
ammuni-
tion.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
423.

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town, across the Allied camp, which was buried in sleep, and got safely into the fortress, bringing with them sixty thousand pounds of powder and eight hundred muskets.

51.
Extraordi-
nary entry
of a French
officer into
Lille by
swimming.

Another deed of heroism, which deserves to be recorded, occurred at the same time in the French army. It was of the greatest importance for their generals to be enabled to communicate with the garrison of Lille, in order to know of what they most stood in need ; but so vigilant was the guard kept by the besiegers, that it was no easy matter to see how it was to be accomplished. At length an intrepid captain, named Dubois, volunteered to attempt an entry by means of swimming down the Dyle, which flowed through the fortress. He set out accordingly from the camp, and, after swimming through seven canals, reached the Dyle, near the place where it entered the besiegers' lines. He there dived, and, aided by the current, swam under water for an incredibly long time, so as entirely to elude the observation of the sentinels. He arrived in safety, though excessively fatigued, in the interior of the town, where he was received by Marshal Boufflers, who gave him clothes, and, after indulging him with a short repose, took him round the works, showed him the retrenchments run up behind the breaches, and put him in entire possession of all the circumstances of his situation. The brave Dubois set out at nightfall, on the 15th September, by the Dyle, with a letter in his mouth, wrapped in an envelop of wax, swimming in the most dangerous places in the same manner under water, and, after surmounting a thousand dangers, regained the place where he had first undressed and concealed his clothes, and reached the French camp in safety¹—a rare example of intrepidity, energy, and devotion, exceeding anything

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
425.

which had been described in fiction, and which would pass for incredible, if so many other incidents of this memorable siege had not exceeded all that imagination ever conceived.

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The great danger which the besiegers ran, and which awakened such solicitude in Marlborough's breast, was, that the ammunition would prove deficient. It was already beginning to fail, and the position of Vendôme's army rendered the obtaining any additional supplies from Brussels or Holland out of the question. In this dilemma, the English general had recourse to the only resource which remained, which was, to endeavour to get up supplies from England by way of Ostend. Fortunately, an expedition, of considerable magnitude, lay in the Downs at that time, which had been collected to excite an alarm on the coast of Normandy. Godolphin intended to have sent it to Portugal; but, upon Marlborough's urgent representation how much it was required for the siege of Lille, it was despatched to Ostend. It arrived there, to the number of fourteen battalions, with an abundant supply of ammunition, on 23d September; and Marlborough immediately detached fifteen thousand men from his covering army to protect the passage of the convoy, and he himself transferred his headquarters to Lannoy, to be nearer the scene of action, so as to be able to lend further assistance in the event of its proving necessary.¹

52.
Marlbo-
rough writes
for supplies
from Eng-
land by
Ostend.

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
427. Cove,
iv. 247-249.

On the 27th September the convoy departed from Nieuport, crossed the canal of Nieuport at Leffingen, and directed its course by Stype, to defile through the wood of WYNENDALE. Every imaginable precaution was taken to secure the passage. Cadogan, with twelve battalions and twenty-six squadrons, was posted at

53.
Movements
on both
sides before
the action.

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Hoghlede, to protect the passage in the rear from Tourout to the camp ; and General Webb, who commanded the troops and convoy coming up from Ostend, was to cover the front menaced by the enemy. He sent out parties in every direction to gain intelligence, and sixteen hundred infantry to Oudenberg. On their side the French were not idle ; and Vendôme detached M. de la Mothe, with twenty thousand men, from the camp at Bruges, early on the morning of the 28th, to intercept the convoy. At five in the evening of the 28th they arrived in sight of the Allies, under Webb, who were advancing slowly, encumbered with seven hundred chariots laden with stores and ammunition. Webb, who was a very skilful and experienced officer, immediately drew up his little army, which did not exceed eight thousand men, including three hundred horse, in the woods and brushwood which on either side shut in the defile of Wynendale. Cadogan's men, who were in communication with Webb, were in the rear, protecting the march of the convoy. The issue was momentous : the fate of Lille, probably of the campaign, depended on Webb's maintaining his ground, at the entrance of the defile of Wynendale, till Cadogan had escorted the convoy past the dangerous ground.¹

¹ Coxe, iv. 250, 251.
Rousset, ii. 262. Hist. de Marl. ii. 429, 431.
Hist. Mil. viii. 102, 103.

54.
Action of Wynendale, and passage of the convoy, Sept. 28.

Webb had disposed his men very skilfully in two lines, with his little body of horse in the rear, on either side of the road leading through the defile. They were so concealed by the wood and bushes, that their position and small numbers were alike concealed from the enemy. M. de la Mothe advanced with great confidence, never doubting that, with his great superiority of force, he would rout his opponents, penetrate through and capture the convoy. But he little knew the men with whom he

had to deal. The French commenced the attack on the English right; but they were suddenly received, when they arrived within a hundred yards of the troops posted in the thickets, with so warm a fire, that their whole left wing fell back in confusion on the centre. The French general was not disconcerted by this repulse, but brought up his cavalry, with which he renewed the attack. By this time, however, the fire had opened from all parts of the Allied position, and was so close and well-directed that the horsemen too were hurled back on the foot, who were thrown into irrecoverable confusion. Whole companies fell at once under the discharges of an invisible enemy, whose balls fell from the cool hands of the marksmen with unerring effect on their crowded ranks: the cavalry stumbled over the bodies of the foot-soldiers who had fallen, and the heaps of dead horses soon rendered all efforts to re-form the troops unavailing. After a bloody combat of two hours' duration, the French fell back at all points in utter confusion. Cadogan, who came up with some squadrons during the action, offered to charge the fugitives; but Webb, contented with the advantage he had gained, wisely kept them in hand, and dissuaded the pursuit. The success was decisive. During the action, the convoy defiled in safety in the rear, got past the whole endangered part of the road, and arrived the same evening at Rousselau. Next day it was safely lodged in the walls of Menin, and on the 30th September passed in triumph through Eugene's camp, where it was received with enthusiastic acclamations. In this glorious action, eight thousand English troops defeated twenty thousand French, and inflicted on them a loss of four thousand killed and wounded.¹

¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 432, 433. Hist. Mil. viii. 105, 106. Coxe, iv. 251, 252. Rousset, ii. 252, 253.

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55.
Progress of
the siege
after the
arrival of
the convoy,
October 3.

Encouraged by this success, and replenished by the stores received, the labours of the siege were resumed with redoubled activity. On the 30th September the sap was run on the right, along the whole extent of the covered-way of the half-moon, and vast quantities of turf were cut to fill up the ditch. On the 3d October a grand assault was prepared, on the tenailon on the left, at *mid-day*, experience having proved the truth of Vauban's opinion that, contrary to what might be expected, an assault in the daylight is *less hazardous than one in the dark*.* A sergeant and twelve grenadiers were to lead the forlorn hope ; and, on the signal of their reaching the summit of the breach, the remainder, a thousand strong, were to follow to the assault. The affair was conducted with equal skill and valour. A Scotch sergeant mounted first silently to the summit of the breach in the half-moon : his twelve followers found the guards asleep in the interior of the work. The assaulting column, seeing their comrades on the breach, rushed forward with such vigour that the garrison of the half-moon, panic-struck, threw themselves over the ramparts into the wet ditches, and great numbers perished. From the summit of the rampart, however, the garrison soon perceived the surprise which had taken place, and opened a fire of such severity upon the assailants, who filled the work, and who were entirely exposed, that in a few

* " En 1677 Valeneiennes avait été attaquée et prise en plein jour. Jusqu'à là on avait cru que les attaques devaient se faire de nuit, pour marcher sans être aperçus et épargner le sang des soldats. ' Vous le ménagerez bien davantage,' disait Vauban, contre l'avis du cinq mareschaux de France et de Louvois. ' Quand on combat de jour, sans confusion et tumulte, sans craindre qu' une partie de nos gens tire sur l'autre ; d'ailleurs nous surprendrons l'ennemi extenué des fatigues d'une veille. La nuit favorise les laches, et pendant le jour l'œil du chef excite la valeur.'—*Histoire de Marlborough*, ii. 438, note.

minutes two hundred were struck down. Panic-struck by such a carnage, which they had no means of shunning, the troops were hurrying out of the work, when they were stopped by a Prussian colonel, who, though wounded in four places, retained sufficient strength to keep the men in the work they had gained, till their comrades, by bringing up fascines and gabions, got them under cover. On the following night the assailants, by a sudden attack, established themselves on the salient angle of the counterscarp, directly opposite the great breach, though with a very heavy loss. Throughout this memorable siege not one step was advanced, nor out-work gained, without a struggle which did equal honour to the constancy of the besieged and the heroism of the besiegers.¹

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But although the progress of the besiegers was slow, it was unceasing; and it was evident that, if their progress was not interrupted, it must ultimately prove successful. As a last resource, Vendôme opened the sluices, and inundated the country to the very borders of the dike, so as to intercept Marlborough's communication with Ostend, and prevent the arrival of stores from it. But the English general defeated this device by bringing the stores up in flat-bottomed boats from Ostend to Leffinghen, and thence conveying them in carriages, mounted on very high wheels, to the camp. Cadogan greatly distinguished himself in this difficult service. At this juncture Vendôme succeeded in surprising the important post of Leffinghen, and thus cut off the last link which united the besiegers with Ostend and their depots. Twelve hundred of the Allied troops, the most of them in a state of intoxication, were slain or made prisoners on this occasion. But this advantage came too

¹ Des. iv.
260-271.
Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
439, 440.
Coxe, iv.
256, 257.
Rousset, ii.
265.

56.
New expedi-
ent of
Vendôme's
met by a
counter de-
vice of Marl-
borough's.

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October 22.

late to avert the stroke of fate. The siege continued to advance ; and fifty-five heavy guns thundered from the counterscarp on the breaches, while thirty-six mortars swept all the works which commanded them. Thirty thousand pieces of turf were cut, and immense numbers of gabions and fascines were prepared to fill up the ditch. Finding himself unable to withstand the assault which was now hourly expected, Boufflers, on the 22d October, beat a parley, and capitulated,—having sustained, with unparalleled resolution, a siege of sixty days, of which thirty were with open trenches. Eugene was filled with admiration at his gallant defence, and therefore granted the French general and his brave garrison the most honourable terms. When the articles of capitulation were placed before him, Eugene took the pen and signed them without reading. “ Marshal Boufflers,” said he, “ can demand nothing that he should not ask, nor I grant.” The gates were surrendered on the 23d, and the remainder of the garrison, still five thousand strong, retired into the citadel, where they prolonged their defence for six weeks more.¹

¹ Des. iv. 271. Marlborough to Godolphin, Oct. 24, 1708. Coxe, iv. 263, 294. Hist. Mil. viii. 114-117. Hist. de Marl. iv. 449, 450.

57.
Siege of the citadel of Lille, and diversion of Vendôme against Brussels.

The fall of the external walls of Lille did not terminate the struggle for that important fortress. Marshal Boufflers still held the citadel, a stronghold in itself equal to most fortresses of the first order. No sooner, however, were the Allies in possession of the town than the attack on the citadel commenced with all the vigour which the exhausted state of the magazines would permit. Detached parties were sent into France, which, by levying contributions to a great extent, not only replenished the stores of the Allies, but depressed the spirits of the French, by making them feel, in a manner not to be misunderstood, that the war had at length approached

their own doors. To divert, if possible, Marlborough from his enterprise, the Elector of Bavaria, who had recently returned from the Rhine, was detached by Vendôme with fifteen thousand men against Brussels ; while he himself remained in his intrenched camp on the Scheldt, barring the road from Lille to that city, so as to stop the communication, and be ready to profit by any advantage afforded by the measures which the English general might make for its relief. The governor of Brussels, M. Paschal, who had seven thousand men under his orders, rejected the summons to surrender, and prepared for a vigorous defence ; and meanwhile Marlborough prepared for its relief, by one of those brilliant strokes which, in so peculiar a manner, characterise his campaigns.¹

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
467-469.
Coxe, iv.
273, 274.
Rousset, ii.
267, 269.

Giving out that he was going to separate his army into winter-quarters, he despatched the field-artillery towards Menin, and he himself set out with his staff in rather an ostentatious manner for Courtray. But no sooner had he lulled the vigilance of the enemy by these steps, than, wheeling suddenly round, he advanced with the bulk of his forces towards the Scheldt, and directed them against that part of the French general's lines where he knew them to be weakest. The army, upon seeing these movements, anticipated on the following day the bloodiest battle they had yet had during the war. But the skill of the English general rendered resistance hopeless, and he gained his object with wonderfully little loss. The passage of the river was rapidly effected at three points ; and the French corps stationed at Oudenarde were vigorously assailed and driven back on Grammont, with the loss of twelve hundred men, so as to leave the road uncovered, and divert the attention of the enemy,

58.
Marlbo-
rough's bril-
liant march,
which de-
feats it.

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who deemed this the menaced point. Thus they left the communication with Brussels unimpeded. Having thus cleared the way, Marlborough sent back Eugene to resume the siege of the citadel of Lille; while he himself, with the greater part of his forces, proceeded on to Brussels, to raise the siege, which was immediately done, Marlborough entering the town in triumph on the 29th November. The Elector of Bavaria was too happy to escape, leaving his guns and wounded behind; and the citadel of Lille at length, despairing of succour, capitulated on the 11th December. Thus was this memorable campaign terminated by the capture of the strongest frontier fortress of France, under the eyes of its best general and most powerful army.¹

¹ Des. iv. 362—Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle, Dec. 17, 1708. Hist. de Marl. ii. 472, 473.

59.
Losses sustained on both sides during the siege.

The siege of Lille, one of the most memorable that ever occurred in modern Europe, was at the same time one of the most bloody. The French garrison, consisting of fifteen thousand men when it commenced, and subsequently reinforced by the eighteen hundred horsemen who came in with the powder, was reduced to five thousand when Marshal Boufflers retired into the citadel, and to four thousand five hundred when that last stronghold surrendered. Nothing can demonstrate more clearly the desperate nature of the defence, and the ability and firmness with which it was conducted by that gallant chief and the French engineers. But heavy as their losses were, they were yet outdone by the casualties of the besiegers. They lost 3632 killed, and 8322 wounded—in all 11,854—besides 7000 who perished from sickness during the autumnal months. Great as this loss was, it was yet well worth incurring, for the immense advantage of securing the reduction of this noble fortress, and obtaining a solid footing in the French territory.² Pos-

² Rousset, ii. 266. Hist. de Marl. ii. 458. Hist. Mil. viii. 122.

sessed of this great stronghold, the Allies were in a condition to push their advantages into the heart of France, and make Louis XIV. tremble in his halls at Versailles. His weakness was now made manifest in the eyes of all the world,—his first fortress and chief bulwark had been wrested from him in the presence of his last army, under the direction of his ablest general.

If the conquest of Lille exhibited a noble instance of constancy on both sides, and illustrated not less the courage of the vanquished than the resolution of the victors, not less admirable was the courtesy and politeness which the redoubtable antagonists displayed towards each other when the contest was over. Louis XIV. set the example of a noble spirit in adversity by writing a holograph letter to Marshal Boufflers, when shut up in the citadel, in which he exhorted him not to prolong a defence, already so glorious, to the last extremity, but to preserve by a capitulation the remains of a garrison which had deserved so well of their country. It was on that authority that the garrison capitulated, though not before they had blown away nearly their last flask of powder in their defence. For long they had subsisted only on horse-flesh. On the day when the citadel capitulated, Prince Eugene and the Prince of Orange went to pay their respects to Marshal Boufflers, who kept them to supper. The first course consisted of the roasted horse-flesh on which he, as well as the rest of the garrison, had so long subsisted—"in order," as he himself said, "that they might be regaled with the same dishes on which they had long lived in the fortress;" the second consisted of every delicacy and luxury which could be obtained in the city. The next day Marshal Boufflers and his staff dined with Prince Eugene, who

60.
Courtesy
and mutual
compliments after
the capitulation.

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¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
481.

61.
Marlbo-
rough's
anxious
wish to en-
ter France
after the
fall of Lille.

with delicate generosity overwhelmed them with compliments on their gallant defence. "I congratulate myself," said Eugene, "on having taken Lille; but I should have preferred having defended it as you have done. My enterprise was too rash in the conception to be glorious in the execution."¹

As soon as the crisis was over, by the fall of Lille, Marlborough resumed his original design of marching direct into France, and, if possible, bringing the enemy to a general battle. He had now obtained the base which Eugene justly considered essential for such an operation, and was firmly convinced that, if attended with success, it would have the effect of attaining the object on which of all others he was most set—that of obtaining an early, honourable, and lasting peace. He earnestly pressed this project, accordingly, both on his own and the Dutch government at this time, and made it a particular article in his instructions to Sir Richard Temple, the British plenipotentiary at the Hague, and repeatedly and strongly enforced it in his subsequent letters. He also imparted his resolution to keep the field till they had effected the reduction of Ghent and Bruges, the possession of which was necessary for the security of their quarters in Brabant.* While these

* "As soon as we have the citadel, we shall then be more at liberty to act against the enemy; and I do assure you that our intentions are to do all that lies in our power to bring them to action. If God blesses us with further success before we go into winter-quarters, there is no doubt of having a good peace; but if all things remain as they now are, the only way of having a speedy and good peace is to augment the troops, so that we may enter France the next campaign with a good superiority, and that the fleet may be assisting to us, which, with the assistance of God Almighty, is what will in all likelihood bring this troublesome war to a happy end; which is, I believe, more wished for by your humble servant than by any other body living."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Nov. 6, 1708; COXE, iv. 268.

vigorous and decisive measures, calculated at once to terminate the war, were in contemplation at the Allied headquarters, disunion and irresolution prevailed at those of the French. What was proposed by the one was invariably opposed by the other; appeals were constantly made to Louis at Versailles; and to such a pitch did the dissension at length arise, that Berwick was removed to the command of the army on the Rhine; and Chamillard, in the beginning of November, was sent to the French headquarters with instructions to confine hostilities to a war of posts, and avoid a general battle.¹

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¹ Berwick's
Mem. 139-
141. Hist.
Mil. viii.
123-129.
Coxe, iv.
265-266.

The fall of the citadel of Lille did not terminate this memorable campaign. Marlborough, like Cæsar, deemed nothing done while anything remained to do—*Nihil actum credens, dum quid superesset agendum*. Though his troops were exhausted by marching and fighting almost without intermission for five months, and he himself was labouring under severe illness in consequence of his fatigues, he resolved in the depth of winter to make an attempt for the recovery of Ghent, the loss of which in the early part of the campaign had been the subject of such deep mortification. The enemy, after the citadel of Lille capitulated, had naturally broken up their army into cantonments, under the belief that the campaign was concluded; but Marlborough suddenly collected his forces, and drew round Ghent on the 18th December. Eugene formed the covering force with the corps lately employed in the reduction of Lille. The garrison was very strong, consisting of no less than thirty-five battalions and nineteen squadrons, mustering eighteen thousand combatants. The governor had been instructed by Vendôme to defend this important strong-

^{62.}
Marlbo-
rough re-
covers
Ghent, Jan.
2, 1709.

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hold to the last extremity;* but he was inadequately supplied with provisions and forage, and the result signally belied the expectations formed of his resistance. The approaches were vigorously pushed. A hundred and fifty cannon and mortars were quickly brought around the city by the adjoining canals. On the 24th, the trenches were opened; on the 25th, a sortie was repulsed; on the 28th December, the fire began with great vigour from the breaching and mortar batteries; and at noon the governor sent a flag of truce, offering to capitulate if not relieved before the 2d January. This was agreed to; and on the latter day, as no friendly force approached, the garrison opened their gates and marched out, in such strength that they were defiling incessantly from ten in the morning till seven at night! The loss of this great and important fortress gave the utmost vexation to the French government. "M. de la Mothe said that he was driven to it from the want of lead to make bullets; but I say," said Marshal Villars, "he had lead enough to serve him to the end of the world, since all the churches were covered with it."¹

Bruges immediately followed this example: the garrison capitulated, and the town again hoisted the Austrian flag. The minor forts of Plassendael and Leffinghen were immediately evacuated by the enemy. With such expedition were these important operations conducted, that, before Vendôme could even assemble a force adequate to interrupt the besiegers' operations,

¹ Marlborough to Duke de Mole, Dec. 10, 1708. Des. iv. 315-346. Coxe, iv. 278. Hist. de Marl. ii. 484-488. Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle, Jan. 3, 1709. Des. iv. 389.

63.
And Bruges; concludes the campaign, and again refuses the government of the Netherlands.

* "Quoiqu' elle ne soit pas forte en elle même, Gand ne peut être attaquée que par des endroits difficiles et étroits; vous avez des troupes suffisantes pour vendre chère cette conquête aux Alliés, s'ils persistent dans leur dessein. Vous avez des officiers capable de vous seconder: vous avez eu le malheur de commander à Ostende que l'ennemi a réduite en peu de jours; et de n'avoir pas réussi dans le combat de Wynendale: il est de votre intérêt

both towns were taken, and the French were entirely dispossessed of all the important strongholds they had gained in the early part of the campaign in the heart of Brabant. Having closed his labours with these glorious successes, Marlborough put the army into winter-quarters, now rendered secure, on the Flemish frontiers, and himself repaired to the Hague to resume his usual contest with the timidity and selfishness of the Dutch Allies. Thus had Marlborough the glory, in one campaign, of defeating in a pitched battle the best general and most powerful army possessed by France, and capturing its strongest frontier fortress, the masterpiece of Vauban, under the eyes of one hundred and twenty thousand men assembled from all quarters for its relief. He put the keystone at the same time into this arch of glory, by again declining the magnificent offer of the government of the Low Countries, with its appointment of sixty thousand a-year, for life, a second time pressed upon him by King Charles, from an apprehension that such an offer might give umbrage to the government of Holland, or excite jealousy in the Queen's government at home.¹ *

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¹ Hist. de Marl. ii. 488-491. Coxe, iv. 295-298. Rousset, ii. 270, 271.

Not content with this splendid proof of disinterestedness, Marlborough at this period gave a further proof of his noble character and anxious desire to bring about a general pacification; which is the more important that it is not generally known, and decisively refutes the common calumny that he exerted himself to prolong the war for selfish purposes. So far from this, he at this period

64.
Marlborough's letter to the Duke of Berwick, urging a general peace.

que dans cette occasion vous méritiez par votre conduite les recompenses de sa Majesté, après lesquelles vous aspirez depuis si longtemps."—*Chamillard à M. de la Mothe*, 6th Dec. 1708; *Hist. de Marl.* ii. 487.

* "You will find me, my Prince, always ready to renew the patent for the government of the Low Countries, formerly sent to you, and to extend it *for your life*."—*King Charles to Marlborough*, August 8, 1708; COXE, iv. 245.

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1708.

wrote a private and confidential letter to his nephew, the Duke of Berwick, representing, what was undoubtedly true, that France was exhausted and could no longer maintain the contest, and urging him to use his influence, which was very great, with Louis XIV., to induce him to accede to the terms of the Allies, and conclude a general peace.* Marlborough's anxiety on that subject was extreme: there is scarcely a letter to the Duchess during that year in which his anxiety for an honourable pacification, and rest from his labours at home, is not strongly and most earnestly expressed.† Doubtless he did not wish a peace to be concluded, which might abandon

* “ Pendant que j'étois au Saulsoy, dans le mois de Novembre, je reçus secrètement une lettre du Duc de Marlborough, qui me marquait que la conjuncture présente étoit très propre pour entamer une négociation de paix; qu'il fallait en à faire la proposition aux députés des Etats-Généraux, au Prince Eugène et à lui Marlborough: qu'ils ne manqueraient pas de la lui communiquer, et qu'il feroit tout de son mieux pour la faire accepter. Rien ne pouvait être plus avantageux que cet avis du Duc de Marlborough; cela nous ouvrait une porte honorable pour finir une guerre onéreuse. J'en parlai à Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgoyne, et à M. de Chamillard, qui envoya aussitôt un courier au Roi, pour recevoir ses ordres sur la réponse. Le Roi les envoya à M. de Chamillard, qui par un excès de politique s'étoit imaginé que cette proposition de Marlborough ne provenait que de la mauvaise situation où se trouvait l'armée des Alliés. J'avoue que ce raisonnement me passait; et par la manière dont Marlborough m'avoit écrit, j'étois persuadé que la peur n'y avoit aucune part, mais seulement l'envie de finir une guerre dont toute l'Europe commençait à se lasser. Il n'y avoit aucune apparence de mauvaise foi dans tout ce qu'il me mandoit, et il ne s'étoit adressé à moi que dans la vue de faire passer la négociation par mes mains, croyant que cela pourroit m'être utile. M. de Chamillard me dicta la réponse que je devois faire, et je la trouvai si extraordinaire que je l'envoyai en Français, afin que la Duc de Marlborough put voir qu'elle ne venait pas de moi.”—*Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick*, 138, 139, tom. lxvi.—Collection de Petitot.

† “ Our passage of the Scheldt, and relief of Brussels, has encouraged me to take measures for the siege of Ghent, though the season is so far advanced that I tremble every day for fear of ill weather. If we take Ghent, I think we shall have a *certainly of a good peace, which is every day more and more wished for by me.*”—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, Dec. 6, 1708; COXE, iv. 282.

the whole objects of the war, and cause all the sacrifices of the nation to go for nothing. But such a one as might secure the independence of Europe and the Protestant succession in Great Britain was the object of his most anxious solicitude: a feeling the more honourable, that it pervaded the breast of a warrior at the very summit of military glory, and whom war had elevated to the pinnacle of worldly grandeur.

While Marlborough was thus enhancing his military laurels by his efforts to mingle them with the olive branch, one of his bravest and noblest companions in arms was removed from this earthly scene. On the 18th October, Marshal Overkirk expired at Roussellau in the 67th year of his age, esteemed alike by the army with which he had fought and the enemy which he had combated. He was nobly descended, though the bar sinister stained the birth of one of his ancestors. His father was the fruit of the loves of Maurice, son of William, Prince of Nassau, and the Lady of Mechlin. Overkirk was worthy of his descent from a hero whom Henry IV., who knew him well, called the greatest captain in the world. Like William the Conqueror, Overkirk showed that the spirit of a hero can sometimes be transmitted in other channels than those sanctioned by the church. He had signalised himself in thirty campaigns. At the terrible battle of St Denis in Flanders, he saved the life of William, fifth Stadtholder of Holland. The victories of Ramilies and Oudenarde were in no small degree owing to the zeal and ability with which he followed out the views, and the courage with which he executed the orders, of Marlborough and Eugene. Simple in his manners, loyal in his heart, patriotic in his feelings, generous in his affections, alike

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65.
Death and
character of
Marshal
Overkirk.

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without envy and without guile, he merited, if any man ever did, the appellation of "*le Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*." While Marlborough was surrounded at home by nameless contemporaries with jealousy and envy, he, the partner of his glory, was inspired with the utmost admiration for his great qualities, and proved himself the ablest supporter of his measures. Though enfeebled by his labours, he preserved the vigour of his mind to the very last, and sank at last into the grave with a serenity worthy of the days of his glory.¹

¹ Hist. de
Marlb. ii.
482, 483.

66.
Glorious re-
sults of the
campaign,
and great
ability of
Marlbo-
rough.

Such was the memorable campaign of 1708—one of the most glorious in the military annals of England, and the one in which the extraordinary capacity of the British general perhaps shone forth with the brightest lustre. The vigour and talent of Vendôme, joined to the secret communication which he had with those disaffected to the Austrian government in Ghent and Bruges, procured for him, in the commencement of the campaign, a great, and what, if opposed by less ability, might have proved a decisive advantage. By the acquisition of these towns, he gained the immense advantage of obtaining the entire command of the water-communication of Brabant, and establishing himself in a solid manner in the heart of the enemy's territory. The entire expulsion of the Allies from Austrian Flanders seemed the unavoidable result of such a success, by so enterprising a general, at the head of a hundred thousand combatants. But Marlborough was not discouraged; on the contrary, he built on the enemy's early successes a course of manœuvres, which in the end wrested all his conquests from him, and inflicted a series of disasters greater than could possibly have been anticipated from a campaign of unbroken success.

Boldly assuming the lead, he struck such a blow at Oudenarde as resounded from one end of Europe to the other, infused a terror into the enemy from which they never recovered during the remainder of the campaign, paralysed Vendôme in the midst of his success, and reduced him from a vigorous offensive to a painful defensive struggle. While the cabinet of Versailles were dreaming of expelling the Allies from Flanders, and detaching Holland, partly by intrigue, partly by force of arms, from the coalition, he boldly entered the territory of the Grand Monarque, laid siege to his chief frontier fortress, and captured it in sight of his greatest army commanded by his best general. In vain was the water-communication of the Netherlands interrupted by the enemy's possession of Ghent and Bruges; with incredible activity he got together, and with matchless skill conducted to the besiegers' lines before Lille, a huge convoy, fifteen miles long, drawn by sixteen thousand horses, in the very teeth of Vendôme, at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men. Lille captured, Ghent and Bruges recovered, the Allied standards solidly planted on the walls of the strongest fortress of France, terminated a campaign in which the British, overmatched and surrounded by lukewarm or disaffected friends, had wellnigh lost at the outset, by foreign treachery, all the fruits of the victory of Ramilies.

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1703.

67.
His bold
offensive
measures,
and extra-
ordinary
capture of
Lille.

The siege of Lille is one of the most memorable and interesting of which history has preserved mention. Like those of Troy and Carthage in ancient, of Malta and Jerusalem in modern times, it was not merely the theatre of contest between rival powers, but of struggle between contending principles and rival faiths. The great contest between the Romish Church and the Reformation

68.
Great issue
at stake in
the siege of
Lille.

CHAP.

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1708.

issued, as all such schisms in belief must in the end do, in a terrible war : Louis was the head of the ancient, Marlborough the champion of the new faith ; the circumstance of the Spanish succession was but an accident, which brought into the field forces on either side previously arrayed under these opposite banners. It was the great division of men's minds which drew them forth in such strength into the field of war. The war itself was brought to a point at the siege of Lille ; the great deeds of Marlborough and Eugene had drawn to their standards nearly the whole forces of the Alliance ; the danger of France had compelled Louis to array round the army of Flanders nearly the whole strength of the monarchy. The war everywhere else languished ; in Flanders alone it was pursued with fearful energy : all Europe looked on in suspense at the battle-field, where Marlborough and Eugene contended with Vendôme and Berwick—where the conqueror of Blenheim measured swords with the hero of Almanza. The strife of opinion, the war of independence, were alike brought to an issue in that memorable contest ; and Marlborough, so far as military success could, had brought it to a glorious termination. But at this moment domestic faction stepped in to thwart the efforts of patriotism ; and his subsequent life is but the record of the efforts of selfish ambition to wrest from the hero the laurels, from the nation the fruits, of victory.

A P P E N D I X.

CHAPTER VI.

NOTE A, p. 415.

REGULATIONS OF MARLBOROUGH AND EUGENE FOR THE SIEGE OF LILLE.

“FIFTY battalions shall be constantly employed in the siege, of whom ten shall always be in the trenches. The Imperialists, the Palatines, and the Hessians shall each take two days successively ; the English, Dutch, and auxiliaries, shall then take three days each in their turn. The battalions employed in the trenches shall not be called on to furnish workmen, but this shall be done by those who are not : the Imperialists, with the Palatines, numbering ten battalions, shall first man the trenches, with a lieutenant-general, two major-generals, and four thousand labourers, who shall be sent back in the morning in order that they may have time to rest. The trenches shall in general be relieved at four o'clock in the evening, in order that the officers may have daylight sufficient to visit the works, and see what requires to be done during the night. The attacks and particular actions shall be made by the grenadiers and detachments from the whole army. If it becomes necessary to post some battalions at the tail of the trench, the one shall be made use of which is nearest at hand. According to the nature of the ground, they shall place behind the breastworks at the tail of the trench a reserve of cavalry on the right or left, or aside, as the officer in command of the trench may deem most expedient. The major of the trench is to be responsible for the furnishing of everything necessary for his service ; and he shall inform the general in command who visits the trench of anything which he may require to push on the works according to the plans of the directors and engineers. The directors of the approaches shall prepare in the morning the supplies which

they require for the evening : the major of the trench shall be informed of it in good time, and even before the trench is relieved, in order that he may have full time to have everything ready and in hand. The fascines and gabions shall be brought to the entry of the trench by the commissary of fascines, who shall be furnished with at least a hundred chariots to bring away the others : the fascines shall be carried to the head of the trench by the labourers. The colonels and officers of artillery shall be charged with the formation of the batteries, after having learned from the directors of the approaches what works are to be attacked, whether to batter the defences or to batter in breach. The miners shall be made use of for the sap, while waiting until they are attached to the works ; the labourers commanded by two lieutenant-colonels and two majors, having under them a captain, lieutenant, ensign, and four sergeants for every hundred and fifty men. The major-generals who are to relieve the trenches shall enter them in the morning with the majors of regiments, in order to examine the condition and situation of the posts, and form the battalions who are to occupy them. The officers of the trench shall do all that the directors demand of them : if it is a pressing attack they shall execute it on the instant, first informing the general of the trench ; but if it is not an affair of so pressing a nature, the officers and directors shall previously inform the general of their intention.

“EUGENE.

“MARLBOROUGH.”

“A general,” says the French annalist of the siege, “who takes such precautions is almost sure of victory ; woe to those who have such an enemy to combat !”—See *Histoire de Marlborough*, ii. 372-374.

END OF VOL. I.







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